



INSPECTOR GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
4800 MARK CENTER DRIVE
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22350-1500

September 4, 2019
Ref: DODOIG-2019-000707

SENT VIA EMAIL TO: 73716-39639999@requests.muckrock.com

Emma Best
Muckrock News
DEPT MR 73716, 411A Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02144

Dear Emma Best:

This responds to your enclosed Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, which you submitted via FOIAOnline. We received your request on May 22, 2019, and assigned it case number DODOIG-2019-000707.

The Mission Support Team conducted a search and found the enclosed records responsive to your request. We determined that the redacted portions are exempt from release pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(6), which pertains to information, the release of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. In this instance, personally identifiable information, such as names, phone numbers, email addresses, grades, and duty titles, of DoD personnel has been withheld.

If you consider this an adverse determination, you may submit an appeal. Your appeal, if any, must be postmarked within 90 days of the date of this letter. Since you have created an account in FOIAOnline, please log in to your account, retrieve your original request, and then click on the "Create Appeal" tab in the left-hand column. FOIAOnline will populate your request and contact information automatically. In the "Basis for Appeal" box, provide your explanation, attach supporting document (if necessary), click on preview, and then click on submit. Your appeal will automatically be sent to our office via FOIAOnline. For more information on appellate matters and administrative appeal procedures, please refer to 32 C.F.R. Sec. 286.9(e) and 286.11(a).

During our review, we determined that the Office of the Secretary of Defense/Joint Staff (OSD/JS) is the release authority for records that may be responsive to your request. As such, we have referred those pages to OSD/JS for processing and direct response to you. If you would like to inquire about the status of this portion of your request, please contact OSD/JS directly at:

OSD/JS FOIA Requester Service Center
Office of Freedom of Information
Defense Pentagon 1155
Washington, DC 20301-1155
Telephone: 571-372-0498
Email: whs.mc-alex.esd.mbx.osd-js-foia-requester-service-center@mail.mil
Website: <https://www.esd.whs.mil/FOID.aspx>

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You may contact our FOIA Public Liaison at FOIAPublicLiaison@dodig.mil or by calling 703-604-9785, for any further assistance with your request. Additionally, you may contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration to inquire about the FOIA mediation services they offer. The contact information for OGIS is as follows: Office of Government Information Services, National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS, College Park, Maryland 20740-6001, e-mail at ogis@nara.gov; telephone at 202-741-5770; toll free at 1-877-684-6448; or facsimile at 202-741-5769. However, OGIS does not have the authority to mediate requests made under the Privacy Act of 1974 (request to access one's own records).

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact this office at 703-604-9775 or via email at foiarequests@dodig.mil.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Searle' followed by a stylized surname.

Searle Slutzkin
Division Chief
FOIA, Privacy and Civil Liberties Office

Enclosure(s):
As stated

DODOIG-2019-000707 request Details

Due Date: 06/26/2019 Clock Days: 65Backlogged

Requester Information

Requester	Emma Best	Tracking Number	DODOIG-2019-000707
Organization		Submitted Date	05/22/2019
Requester Has Account	Yes	Received Date	05/22/2019
Email Address	73716-39639999@requests.muckrock.com	Perfected Date	05/29/2019
		Last Assigned Date	05/22/2019
		Assigned To	Armando Candelaria (Department of Defense Office of Inspector General)
Phone Number		Last Assigned By	Searle Slutzkin (Department of Defense Office of Inspector General)
Fax Number			
Address	MuckRock News, DEPT MR 73716 411A Highland Ave Somerville MA 02144	Request Track	Complex
City		Fee Limit	\$0.00
State/Province			
Zip Code/Postal Code			

Request Handling

Requester Info Available to the Public?	No	Request Type	FOIA
Request Track	Complex	Request Perfected	Yes
Fee Category	Other	Perfected Date	05/29/2019
Fee Waiver Requested	Yes	Acknowledgement Sent Date	05/23/2019
Fee Waiver Status	Full Grant	Unusual Circumstances	No
Expedited Processing Requested	No	Litigation	No
Expedited Processing Status		Court Docket Number	
		5 Day Notifications?	No

Description

Long Description

To Whom It May Concern: Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, I hereby request the following records: I seek any and all documents in the agency's possession that pertain to the WikiLeaks website or organization from January 2006 to the present date, including but not limited to emails, memos, notes, briefings, reports and other documents related to, mentioning or generated as a result of: * guidance and instructions for employees regarding visiting the website or otherwise reading or learning about it in the news * internal reactions to the website's existence and disclosures * damage reports regarding the website and its disclosures * efforts to identify, investigate and/or mitigate potential leaks to the website * efforts to identify, investigate and/or mitigate potential unauthorized viewing of the website or news reports analyzing it and/or its contents The requested documents will be made available to the general public, and this request is not being made for commercial purposes. In the event that there are fees, I would be grateful if you would inform me of the total charges in advance of fulfilling my request. I would prefer the request filled electronically, by e-mail attachment if available or CD-ROM if not. Thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation in this matter. I look forward to receiving your response to this request within 20 business days, as the statute requires. Sincerely, Emma Best

Has Description Been Modified?

Yes

Long Description Modified

seek any and all documents in the agency's possession that pertain to the WikiLeaks website or organization from January 2006 to the present date, including but not limited to emails, memos, notes, briefings, reports and other documents related to, mentioning or generated as a result of: * guidance and instructions for employees regarding visiting the website or otherwise reading or learning about it in the news * internal reactions to the website's existence and disclosures * damage reports regarding the website and its disclosures * efforts to identify, investigate and/or mitigate potential leaks to the website * efforts to identify, investigate and/or mitigate potential unauthorized viewing of the website or news reports analyzing it and/or its contents

Description Available to the Public?

No

Short Description

Additional Information

Type of Records Requested

N/A

Report Number

N/A

Report Name

N/A

Case

N/A

Limit Request to Clearly Releasable Info

N/A

Cross Reference Case(s)

N/A

Attached Supporting Files

Attachments Available to the
Public?
No

Attached File Name	Size (MB)	File Type
Fee20category20and20search20parameters (10).pdf	0.0195	Adobe PDF Document

From: (b) (6) [OIG DoD](#)
To: (b) (6) [OIG DoD](#); (b) (6) [OIG DoD](#)
Subject: FW: Notice to DoD Employees and Contractors on Protecting Classified Information and the Integrity of Unclassified Government IT Systems
Date: Tuesday, January 18, 2011 12:45:19 PM
Attachments: [USI001836-10.pdf](#)
Importance: High

Per our discussion. This is a related action to the assessment of safeguarding and CI posture for classified info on systems. It needs to be part of the discussion with ISD.

(b) (6)
(b) (6) Office of Security
DoD Office of the Inspector General
coml: (b) (6) DSN: (b) (6)
STE: (b) (6) /DSN: (b) (6)

~~This e-mail is from the Office of the Inspector General, Department of Defense, and may contain information that is "Law Enforcement Sensitive" (LES) or "For Official Use Only" (FOUO) or otherwise subject to the Privacy Act and/or legal and/or other privileges that restrict release without appropriate legal authority.~~

-----Original Message-----

From: (b) (6) [OIG DoD](#)
Sent: Wednesday, January 12, 2011 3:09 PM
To: (b) (6) [OIG DoD](#)
Cc: (b) (6) [OIG DoD](#); (b) (6) [OIG DoD](#)
Subject: FW: Notice to DoD Employees and Contractors on Protecting Classified Information and the Integrity of Unclassified Government IT Systems

Yours to disseminate by whatever means. r/

(b) (6)
(b) (6)

-----Original Message-----

From: (b) (6) [OIG DoD](#)
Sent: Wednesday, January 12, 2011 12:03 PM
To: (b) (6) [OIG DoD](#)
Subject: FW: Notice to DoD Employees and Contractors on Protecting Classified Information and the Integrity of Unclassified Government IT Systems

-----Original Message-----

From: (b) (6) [OSD OUSDI](#) (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, January 12, 2011 11:48 AM
To: (b) (6)

(b) (6)

(b) (6)



Cc: (b) (6)

OSD OUSDI

Subject: Notice to DoD Employees and Contractors on Protecting Classified Information and the Integrity of
Unclassified Government IT Systems

Subject document attached, please disseminate accordingly.

r/

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

OUSD (I), CoS

Pentagon, (b) (6)

(b) (6)

From: (b) (6) [OIG DoD](#)
To: [Halbrooks, Lynne M., SES, OIG DoD](#); [Child, Michael S., SES, OIG DoD](#); [Burch, James B., SES, OIG DoD](#); [Brannin, Patricia A., SES, OIG DoD](#); [Horstman, Donald M., SES, OIG DoD](#); [Blair, Daniel R., SES, OIG DoD](#); [Shelley, Henry C., SES, OIG DoD](#); (b) (6) [OIG DoD](#)
Cc: [Crane, John R., SES, OIG DoD](#); (b) (6) [OIG DoD](#); (b) (6) [OIG DoD](#); (b) (6) [OIG DoD](#)
Subject: WikiLeaks information
Date: Tuesday, July 27, 2010 4:22:13 PM
Attachments: [Wikileaks Communication points.doc](#)
[Julian Assange.pdf](#)
[Wikileaks Articles_072710.doc](#)

Ms. Halbrooks, et al:

(b) (6) asked me to send the attached documents to you, beginning with the news summary. The other two are a pdf of the Wikipedia bio on Mr. Assange, and communication points regarding how we respond to any questions regarding WikiLeaks. The communication points were vetted through DCIS.

(b) (6)
(b) (6) Public Affairs
Office of Communications and Congressional Liaison
DoD Office of the Inspector General
400 Army Navy Drive
Arlington, VA 22202

Phone: (b) (6)
FAX: (703) 604-8325

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Wikileaks and Compromise of Classified DoD Information

Communication Points:

- The leakage and compromise of classified information is a violation of criminal law.
- Multiple federal law enforcement agencies may be involved in the investigation of a case involving the unauthorized release of sensitive, classified information, depending on the source of that information.
- In cases involving the compromise of sensitive, classified DoD information, the focus of a DCIS investigation would be the civilian or military DoD member or members responsible for providing the unauthorized release of that information.
- As a matter of policy, DCIS does not confirm or deny the existence of, or comment upon investigations.

Background:

Julian Assange

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Julian Paul Assange (English pronunciation: /əˈsɑːnz/; born 1971) is an Australian internet activist and journalist best known for his involvement with Wikileaks, a whistleblower website. Assange was a physics and mathematics student, a hacker and a computer programmer, before taking on his current role as spokesperson and editor in chief for Wikileaks. Assange has said that "you can't publish a paper on physics without the full experimental data and results; that should be the standard in journalism".^[1]

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- 1 Biography
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 - 1.2 Computer programming
 - 1.3 University studies and travel
 - 1.4 WikiLeaks
 - 1.5 Public appearances
- 2 Characterisation of Assange and his work
- 3 References
- 4 External links

Biography

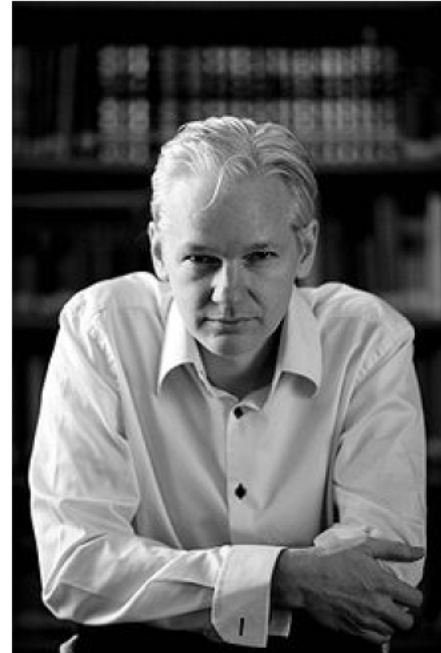
Early life

Assange was born in Townsville, Queensland in 1971.^[2] Assange has said that his parents ran a touring theatre company, and that he was enrolled in 37 schools and six universities in Australia over the course of his early life.^[3] During his childhood years, he lived on the run with mother and half-brother. They were avoiding his half-brother's father who was believed to belong to a cult led by Anne Hamilton-Byrne.^[2]

An article in *The New Yorker* has written that Assange was married to his girlfriend in an unofficial ceremony at the age of 18 and had a son.^[2] The article says she left him while he was being investigated by the Australian Federal Police for hacking, and took their son.^[2]

Assange helped to write the 1997 book *Underground: Tales of Hacking, Madness and Obsession on the Electronic Frontier* which credits him as researcher.^[4] It draws from his teenage experiences as a

Julian Assange



Julian Assange in 2010

Born	1971 (age 38–39) <div>Townsville, Queensland, Australia</div>
Occupation	Currently <div>Editor in chief and spokesperson for Wikileaks</div> Previously <div>Journalist, programmer, internet activist</div>
Board member of	Wikileaks
Awards	Amnesty International UK Media Awards 2009, Sam Adams Award 2010

member of a hacker group named "International Subversives", which involved a 1991 raid of his Melbourne home by the Australian Federal Police.^{[5][6]} *Wired*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, and *The Sunday Times* have pointed out that there exist similarities between Assange and the person called "Mendax" in the book.^{[7][8][9]} *The New Yorker* has identified Assange as Mendax and explains its origin from a phrase of Horace. Assange was reported to have accessed various computers (belonging to an Australian university, a telecommunications company, and other organizations) via modem^[10] to test their security flaws; he later pleaded guilty to 24 charges of hacking and was released on bond for good conduct after being fined AU\$2100.^{[5][6][8]}

According to the Personal Democracy Forum, Assange founded a civil rights group for children called "Pickup".^[11]

Computer programming

After the hacking trial, Assange lived in Melbourne as a programmer and a developer of free software.^[8]

In 1995, Assange wrote Strobe, the first free and open source port scanner.^{[12][13]} Strobe inspired Fyodor to develop the Nmap port scanner.^[14]

Starting around 1997, Assange co-invented "Rubberhose deniable encryption", a cryptographic concept made into a software package for Linux designed to provide plausible deniability against rubber-hose cryptanalysis,^[15] which he originally intended "as a tool for human rights workers who needed to protect sensitive data in the field".^[16]

Other free software that Assange has authored or co-authored includes the Usenet caching software NNTPCache^[17] and Surfraw, a command line interface for web-based search engines.

University studies and travel

Assange studied physics and mathematics at the University of Melbourne until 2006, when he began to focus heavily on Wikileaks.^[2] He has been described as being largely self-taught and widely read on science and mathematics.^[8] He has also studied philosophy and neuroscience.^[11] On his personal web page Assange described how he represented his University at the Australian National Physics Competition around 2005.^[18]

Assange has said that it is "pretty much true" that he is constantly on the move, and that he is "living in airports these days".^{[2][19]} Assange has lived for periods in Australia, Kenya and Tanzania, and has visited many other places including Vietnam, Sweden, Iceland, Siberia, Belgium and the United States.^{[2][19][20][21][22]} Assange began renting a house in Iceland on March 30, 2010, from which he and other activists, including Birgitta Jónsdóttir, worked on the collateral murder video.^[2] In May 2010 upon landing in Australia, his passport was taken from him, and when it was returned he was told that his passport was to be cancelled. The Australian Customs Service stated that such confiscation was only because his passport was worn, and that Assange was otherwise free to travel.^{[23][24]}

In 1999, Assange registered the website, Leaks.org; "but", he says, "then I didn't do anything with it".^[21]

WikiLeaks

Main article: Wikileaks

Wikileaks was founded in 2006.^{[2][19]} Assange now sits on its nine-member advisory board,^[25] and is a prominent media spokesman on its behalf. While newspapers have described him as a "director"^[26] or "founder"^[5] of Wikileaks, Assange has said "I don't call myself a founder",^[27] but he does describe himself as the editor in chief of Wikileaks,^[28] and has stated that he has the final decision in the process of vetting documents submitted to the site.^[6] Like all others working for the site, Assange is an unpaid volunteer.^[27]

Assange was the winner of the 2009 Amnesty International Media Award (New Media),^[29] awarded for exposing extrajudicial assassinations in Kenya with the investigation *The Cry of Blood - Extra Judicial Killings and Disappearances*.^[30]

In accepting the Amnesty International Media Award 2009, Mr. Assange stated:

It is a reflection of the courage and strength of Kenyan civil society that this injustice was documented. Through the tremendous work of organizations such as the Oscar foundation, the KNHCR, Mars Group Kenya and others we had the primary support we needed to expose these murders to the world. I know that they will not rest, and we will not rest, until justice is done.

—“*WikiLeaks wins Amnesty International 2009 Media Award for exposing Extra judicial killings in Kenya*”.^[31]

He has also won the 2008 Economist Index on Censorship Award; and various other media awards.^[32]



Julian Assange at New Media Days '09 in Copenhagen

Assange says that Wikileaks has released more classified documents than the rest of the world press combined:

That's not something I say as a way of saying how successful we are - rather, that shows you the parlous state of the rest of the media. How is it that a team of five people has managed to release to the public more suppressed information, at that level, than the rest of the world press combined? It's disgraceful.^[19]

Public appearances

Since WikiLeaks has opened, Assange has appeared at news-oriented conferences such as New Media Days '09 in Copenhagen,^[33] the 2010 Logan Symposium in Investigative Reporting at the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism,^[34] and at hacker-oriented conferences, notably at the 25th and 26th Chaos Communication Congress (representing Wikileaks together with Daniel Schmitt).^{[35][36]} In the first half of 2010, he has appeared on international news agencies such as Al Jazeera English,^[37] MSNBC,^[38] Democracy Now,^[39] RT,^[40] and *The Colbert Report*^[41] to discuss the release of the July 12, 2007 Baghdad airstrike video by Wikileaks. The same was covered in literary journalistic fashion by *The New Yorker*.^[2]

On June 3 Assange appeared via Skype at the Personal Democracy Forum conference with Daniel Ellsberg.^{[42][43]} Daniel Ellsberg told MSNBC "the explanation he [Assange] used" for not appearing in person in the USA was that "it was not safe for him to come to this country".^[44] On June 11 he was to appear on a Showcase Panel at the Investigative Reporters and Editors conference in Las Vegas,^[45] but there are reports that he cancelled several days prior.^[46] On June 10, 2010, it was reported^[47] that Pentagon officials are trying to determine his whereabouts.^{[48][49][50][51][52][53]} Based on this, there have been reports that U.S. officials want to apprehend Assange.^[54] Ellsberg said that the arrest of Bradley Manning and subsequent speculation by U.S. officials about what Assange may be about to publish "puts his well-being, his physical life, in some danger now".^[44] In *The Atlantic*, Marc Ambinder called Ellsberg's concerns "ridiculous", and said that "Assange's tendency to believe that he is one step away from being thrown into a black hole hinders, and to some extent discredits, his work".^[55] In *Salon*, Glenn Greenwald questioned "screeching media reports" that there was a "manhunt" on Assange underway, arguing that they were only based on comments by "anonymous government officials" and might even serve a campaign by the U.S. government, by intimidating possible whistleblowers.^[50]

On June 21, 2010 Assange took part in a hearing in Brussels, Belgium, appearing in public for the first time in nearly a month.^[20] He was a member on a panel that discussed Internet censorship and expressed his worries over the recent filtering in countries such as Australia. He also talked about secret gag orders preventing newspapers from publishing information about specific subjects and even divulging the fact that they are being gagged. Using an example involving *The Guardian*, he also explained how newspapers are altering their online archives sometimes by removing entire articles.^{[56][57]} He told *The Guardian* that he does not fear for his safety but is on permanent alert and will avoid travel to America, saying "[US] public statements have all been reasonable. But some statements made in private are a bit more questionable". He said "politically it would be a great error for them to act. I feel perfectly safe but I have been advised by my lawyers not to travel to the US during this period".^[20]

On July 17, Jacob Appelbaum spoke on behalf of WikiLeaks at the 2010 Hackers on Planet Earth conference in New York City on July 17, replacing Assange due to the presence of federal agents at the conference.^{[58][59]} He announced that the WikiLeaks submission system was again up and running, after it had been temporarily suspended.^{[58][60]} Assange was a surprise speaker at a TED conference on 19 July 2010 in Oxford, and confirmed that WikiLeaks was now accepting submissions again.^{[61][62][63]}

Characterisation of Assange and his work

In 2006, Assange was described in the magazine *CounterPunch* as "president of a NGO and Australia's most infamous former computer hacker".^[64] *The Age* has called him "one of the most intriguing people in the world" and "internet's freedom fighter".^[21] Assange has called himself "extremely cynical".^[21] The Personal Democracy Forum said that as a teenager he was "Australia's most famous ethical computer hacker".^[11]

Pentagon Papers whistle-blower Daniel Ellsberg stated in an interview that Assange "is serving our (American) democracy and serving our rule of law precisely by challenging the secrecy regulations, which are not laws in most cases, in this country." On the issue of national security considerations for the U.S., Ellsberg added that:

..any serious risk to that national security is extremely low. There may be 260,000 diplomatic

cables. It's very hard to think of any of that which could be plausibly described as a national security risk. Will it embarrass diplomatic relationships? Sure, very likely—all to the good of our democratic functioning. [...] "[Assange is] obviously a very competent guy in many ways. I think his instincts are that most of this material deserves to be out. We are arguing over a very small fragment that doesn't. He has not yet put out anything that hurt anybody's national security."^[65]

References

- [^] <http://blogs.journalism.co.uk/editors/2010/07/12/a-real-free-press-for-the-first-time-in-history-wikileaks-editor-speaks-out-in-london/>
- [^] ***a b c d e f g h i j*** Khatchadourian, Raffi (June 7, 2010). "No Secrets: Julian Assange's Mission for Total Transparency". *The New Yorker*. http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/06/07/100607fa_fact_khatchadourian?currentPage=all. Retrieved 2010-06-16.
- [^] "Meet the Aussie behind Wikileaks". Fairfax New Zealand. July 8, 2008. <http://www.stuff.co.nz/technology/digital-living/524296>. Retrieved 2010-06-16.
- [^] Dreyfus, Suelette (1997). *Underground: Tales of Hacking, Madness and Obsession on the Electronic Frontier*. ISBN 1-86330-595-5.
- [^] ***a b c*** Guilliat, Richard (May 30, 2009). "Rudd Government blacklist hacker monitors police". *The Australian*. <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/rudd-government-blacklist-hacker-monitors-police/story-e6frg8yx-1225718288350>. Retrieved 2010-06-16. [lead-in to a longer article in that day's *The Weekend Australian Magazine*]
- [^] ***a b c*** Kushner, David (April 6, 2010). "Inside WikiLeaks' Leak Factory". *Mother Jones*. <http://motherjones.com/politics/2010/04/wikileaks-julian-assange-iraq-video?page=1>. Retrieved 2010-06-16.
- [^] Symington, Annabel (September 1, 2009). "Exposed: Wikileaks' secrets". *Wired*. <http://www.wired.co.uk/wired-magazine/archive/2009/10/start/exposed-WikiLeaks%27-secrets.aspx?page=all>. Retrieved 2010-06-16.
- [^] ***a b c d*** Lagan, Bernard (April 10, 2010). "International man of mystery". *The Sydney Morning Herald*. <http://www.smh.com.au/technology/technology-news/international-man-of-mystery-20100409-ryvf.html>. Retrieved 2010-06-16.
- [^] "Profile: Julian Assange, the man behind Wikileaks". *The Sunday Times*. April 11, 2010. http://technology.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/tech_and_web/the_web/article7094231.ece. Retrieved 2010-06-16.
- [^] Weinberger, Sharon (April 7, 2010). "Who Is Behind WikiLeaks?". *AOL News*. <http://www.aolnews.com/nation/article/besides-julian-assange-who-is-behind-WikiLeaks/19430055>. Retrieved 2010-06-16.
- [^] ***a b c*** "PdF Conference 2010: Speakers". Personal Democracy Forum. <http://personaldemocracy.com/pdf-conference-2010-june-3-5-new-york-city-speakers#assange>. Retrieved 2010-06-16.
- [^] In this limited application strobe is said to be faster and more flexible than ISS2.1 (an expensive, but verbose security checker by Christopher Klaus) or PingWare (also commercial, and even more expensive).[1]
- [^] "strobe-1.06: A super optimised TCP port surveyor". The Porting And Archive Centre for HP-UX. <http://hpux.connect.org.uk/hppd/hpux/Networking/Admin/strobe-1.06/>. Retrieved 2010-06-16.
- [^] "Prior to writing nmap, I spent a lot of time with other scanners exploring the Internet and various private networks. I have used many of the top scanners available today, including strobe by Julian Assange" [2]
- [^] Singel, Ryan (July 3, 2008). "Immune to Critics, Secret-Spilling Wikileaks Plans to Save Journalism ... and the World". *Wired*. <http://www.wired.com/politics/onlinerights/news/2008/07/wikileaks?currentPage=all>. Retrieved 2010-06-16.
- [^] Dreyfus, Suelette. "The Idiot Savants' Guide to Rubberhose". <http://iq.org/~proff/rubberhose.org/current/src/doc/maruguide/t1.html>. Retrieved 2010-06-16.
- [^] "NNTPCache: Authors". <http://iq.org/~proff/nntpcache.org/>. Retrieved 2010-06-16.
- [^] Assagne, Julian (July 12, 2006). "Wed 12 Jul 2006 : The cream of Australian Physics". IQ.ORG. Archived from the original on October 20, 2007. <http://web.archive.org/web/20071020051936/http://iq.org/#ThecreamofAustralianPhysics>. "A year before,

also at ANU, I represented my university at the Australian National Physics Competition. At the prize ceremony, the head of ANU physics, motioned to us and said, 'You are the cream of Australian physics'."

19. ^{a b c d} "The secret life of Wikileaks founder Julian Assange". *The Sydney Morning Herald*. May 22, 2010. <http://www.smh.com.au/technology/technology-news/the-secret-life-of-wikileaks-founder-julian-assange-20100521-w1um.html>. Retrieved 2010-06-16.
20. ^{a b c} "Wikileaks founder Julian Assange emerges from hiding". *Telegraph*. 2010-06-22. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/news/7845420/Wikileaks-founder-Julian-Assange-emerges-from-hiding.html>. Retrieved 2010-07-05.
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23. ^a Arup, Tom (May 17, 2010). "Australian Wikileak founder's passport confiscated". *The Age*. <http://www.theage.com.au/technology/technology-news/australian-wikileak-founders-passport-confiscated-20100516-v6dw.html>. Retrieved 2010-06-16.
24. ^a Davis, Mark (May 16, 2010). "SBS Dateline: The Whistleblower". Special Broadcasting Service. <http://www.sbs.com.au/dateline/story/about/id/600572/n/The-Whistleblower>. Retrieved 2010-06-16.
25. ^a "WikiLeaks:Advisory Board". Wikileaks. http://wikileaks.org/wiki/WikiLeaks:Advisory_Board. Retrieved 2010-06-16.
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External links

- Archived versions of the home page on Julian Assange's web site iq.org (at the Internet Archive)
- Profile on SBS Dateline
- June 2010 New Yorker article by Raffi Khatchadourian
- WikiLeaks:Advisory Board – Julian Assange, investigative journalist, programmer and activist (short biography on the Wikileaks home page)
- Rumored Manhunt for Wikileaks Founder and Arrest of Alleged Leaker of Video Showing Iraq Killings – video report by *Democracy Now!*

Retrieved from "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_Assange"

Categories: 1971 births | Living people | Australian journalists | Internet activists | Wikileaks | Australian computer programmers | People from Townsville, Queensland

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Tuesday, July 27, 2010

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CBS News

July 27, 2010

Pentagon: "Very Robust" Probe of WikiLeaks Source ***Spokesman Says Release of War Documents "Could Potentially Endanger Our Operations and Forces in Afghanistan"***

(CBS) The Pentagon has launched a "very robust investigation" into the source of the leak of more than 90,000 classified documents on the war in Afghanistan, the release of which a spokesman said "could endanger the lives of our forces and imperil our nation's security."

Appearing on **CBS' "The Early Show"** this morning, Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell said a probe into determining who leaked the documents to the website WikiLeaks, which published them on Sunday (in conjunction with The New York Times, the Guardian and Der Spiegel) is in its early stages.

"Our focus really, frankly, is to try to determine if there is anything in these 90,000 pages of documents that could indeed endanger our forces; we've got a team doing that round the clock," Morrell told **anchor Erica Hill**. "This was dumped on us like it was dumped on you all Sunday night."

"It would have been nice had this organization had the decency to come to us and work with us to try to figure out if there's anything in here that could endanger our forces. We were not given that luxury," he said.

When asked how many people might have had access to this classified information, Morrell replied, "We're not going to get into sort of the scope of what was involved here in terms of the databases that may have been breached. Suffice it to say this information is classified for a reason. This involves secrets that should not be disseminated into the public domain and could potentially endanger our operations and forces in Afghanistan."

The documents cover the years 2004 to 2009, and describe in detail why the U.S. is in so much trouble in Afghanistan: The U.S. has been fighting with too few troops and causing too many civilian casualties; the Afghan government is corrupt and inefficient; and Pakistan is an uncertain ally which at times has supported the same Taliban that is killing American soldiers in Afghanistan.

The White House has been downplaying the substance of these documents as old news.

"Though new and unprecedented in the scope and the sheer size of this leak, the information

itself, the content of these documents, is not particularly new or illuminating," said Morrell, who said the issues raised within the documents dating back six years have been addressed by the current war strategy.

"It points to issues that we've identified as being problem areas for months, if not years," said Morrell. "The under-resourcing of this conflict: the president has tripled the number of forces there. The fact that civilian casualties [have] been a problem which we've been trying to deal with: U.S.-caused civilian casualties down by a third this year, Taliban civilian casualties nearly doubled this year.

"And the Pakistani partnership that is so vital to our success in Afghanistan is one that has been trending in the right direction for months, if not a couple of years now.

"So the most recent of these documents is at least six months old by now, and that is clearly out-of-step with where this relationship is and has been heading for some time now."

In a statement from Hamid Karzai, the Afghan President said, "The recent documents leaked out to the media clearly support and verify ... that success over terrorism does not come with fighting in Afghan villages, but by targeting its sanctuaries and financial and ideological sources across the borders" - an allusion perhaps to Pakistan.

When asked if there was a way to be sure that U.S. nonmilitary aid being sent to Pakistan is not being used in any way to support terrorists, Morrell said, "We have as many controls as we can have on our aid to Pakistan. The Kerry-Lugar-Berman Amendment provides \$1.5 billion a year over the next five years. But remember, this is a sovereign country who we are partnering with in the war on terror. We're working with them together to go after the terrorists in their midst who not only threaten their government and our forces in Afghanistan, but our well-being here stateside, as well as our allies around the world."

The Washington Post



Could Wikileaks offer a way out of war?

By Katrina vanden Heuvel
Tuesday, July 27, 2010;

The war in Afghanistan just got a little foggy -- or a little more transparent -- depending on how you choose to see the weekend's 92,000-item document dump courtesy of Wikileaks. As London's [Guardian editorialized](#), "These war logs -- written in the heat of engagement -- show a conflict that is brutally messy, confused and immediate. It is in some contrast with the tidied-up and sanitised 'public' war, as glimpsed through official communiqués as well as the necessarily limited snapshots of embedded reporting."

The futility and frustration illustrated in these documents should provide a fairly wide opening for a much-needed "what are we doing there, anyway?" debate. And I hope the ensuing discussion will lead President Obama to understand that the human and financial costs of continuing on this path far outstrip any conceivable security benefits. In fact, it is clear from the granular details in the war logs, and especially in the sections about [collusion between Pakistan intelligence services and the Taliban](#), that any homeland security provided by the war is significantly undermined by the anger, resentment -- and armed resistance -- of our Central and South Asian hosts. And the evidence that U.S. troops have [sanitized accounts of bloody scenes](#) they've left in their wake underscores that our presence in Afghanistan is counterproductive.

What to make of the leak itself? Of course, more than a few commentators -- including Daniel Ellsberg himself -- have called it a [twenty-first century Pentagon Papers](#). That "twenty-first century" modifier may prove to be the most salient facet of this story.

In noting the distinct "times have changed" element to the leak, New York University journalism professor [Jay Rosen wrote](#), "In media history up to now, the press is free to report on what the powerful wish to keep secret because the laws of a given nation protect it. But WikiLeaks is able to report on what the powerful wish to keep secret because the logic of the Internet permits it. This is new. Just as the Internet has no terrestrial address or central office, neither does WikiLeaks."

It's also significant that Wikileaks used three traditional news outlets (the Guardian, the New York Times and Germany's Der Spiegel) to deliver its treasure to the masses, a reminder that information is useless unless you (or someone you know) know how to interpret it. At the

Atlantic, [James Fallows loosely proposes](#) that this Wikileaks plus traditional media synergy could prove to be quite valuable for a news industry that's been trying to reinvent itself: "At first glance this is a very sophisticated illustration of how newly evolving media continually change the way we get information, but don't totally replace existing systems. The collaboration of three of the world's leading 'traditional' news brands makes a difference in the way this news is received." After all, can Joe the Plumber be expected to pore over 200,000 pages of documents and determine for himself whether our endeavors in Afghanistan are worth his tax dollars? Should he be expected to do so?

The Times explained in a [Note to Readers](#) that it felt a civic obligation to publish and analyze a portion of the Wikileaks documents: "[T]here are times when the information is of significant public interest, and this is one of those times. The documents illuminate the extraordinary difficulty of what the United States and its allies have undertaken in a way that other accounts have not."

Perhaps a new take on an old war is just what we need to extract ourselves from another quagmire.

Katrina vanden Heuvel is [editor and publisher of The Nation](#) and writes a weekly column for The Post.

National Public Radio

Reporter's View: How The WikiLeaks Story Developed

July 27, 2010

WikiLeaks' release of more than 90,000 military intelligence reports to *The New York Times*, *The Guardian* and *Der Spiegel* revealed many new insights long suspected but never corroborated about the war in Afghanistan.

Among the biggest revelations from the leaked material was the level of detail about Pakistan's spy service and its level of involvement supporting the Taliban insurgency while taking billions of dollars in U.S. aid.

Mark Mazzetti was one of several reporters from *The New York Times* who sifted through and analyzed the documents leaked by WikiLeaks. In a conversation on *Fresh Air*, he details what the documents reveal about the war in Afghanistan and how the *Times* verified the information present in the leaks and then decided what and what not to publish.



Mark Mazzetti covers national security from *The New York Times*' Washington bureau.

More By Mark Mazzetti In 'The New York Times'

[Pakistan Aids Insurgency in Afghanistan, Reports Assert](#)

[View Is Bleaker Than Official Portrayal of War in Afghanistan](#)

[Strategic Plans Spawned Bitter End for a Lonely Outpost](#)

[Piecing Together the Reports, and Deciding What to Publish](#)

[In Disclosing Secret Documents, WikiLeaks Seeks 'Transparency'](#)

"Some things are obvious. If an intelligence report said a named Afghan is giving information to NATO troops and this guy is a good credible informant, we're not going to publish that person's name because that would have a very direct impact. That person could get killed," Mazzetti tells Terry Gross. "I think there's this question of balance: What is the newsworthiness vs. what is the harm? And I think that's probably the test we have to apply on all of these documents. The overarching test is: Is it in the public interest and is it in the interest of our readers to know a certain fact vs. can this do real harm to someone? And I think as we looked through 92,000 documents, that's kind of the overarching guide that we used."

Mazzetti has covered national security from the *Times*' Washington bureau since 2006. He shared a Pulitzer in 2009 for reporting on the increasing levels of violence in Afghanistan and

Pakistan. Before joining the newspaper, he covered the Pentagon and military affairs for *The Los Angeles Times*.

Interview Highlights

The biggest revelations from the leaked documents:

"For me, the most interesting and biggest revelation was the level of detail about Pakistan's spy service, the ISI, and its involvement in the Afghan insurgency. This is not blockbuster news. We've been reporting for several years that the U.S. intelligence community believes that the ISI helps training and financing militant groups in Afghanistan, but what was striking to us was the level of detail about named operatives working in Pakistan and naming specific meetings — the dates, times and places — and even when we threw out some of this information because we didn't think it was credible, we were still left with a body of evidence that we thought was very credible. We then ran this by U.S. officials and they said that while they couldn't vouch for each individual intelligence report, it broadly does track with what the American intelligence community believes the spy service is up to."

What the Bush and Obama administrations were saying publicly vs. privately:

"I think that going back to Pakistan, we can cite cases where both the Bush and the Obama administration go to Islamabad or Pakistani officials and come here and there's a lot of public praise of Pakistan as a solid ally — 'We're all united in the fight against terrorism' — and these are the types of statements we've been hearing for several years. If we then draw the curtain back a bit with these documents, we can see that while there is this public praise, at the same time these very detailed intelligence reports [were] coming in of ISI operatives meeting with Mullah Omar's inner circle, of former ISI heads who seem to have close ties with the Pakistani military who are meeting in the tribal areas trying to plan suicide bombings. I think if there's a public-private disconnect with these documents that for me, the Pakistan case is the most illuminating."

How *The New York Times* was approached by WikiLeaks:

"I may not even know the entire story. I was brought into the project after the initial approach had been made. My understanding of it is that *The Guardian* in London had a relationship with Julian Assange, the head of WikiLeaks. If not a relationship, they knew him and they knew how to contact him. And it had been reported for several weeks that WikiLeaks may have access to troves of documents [about the Afghanistan war.] And I believe it was *The Guardian* who first approached [Julian Assange] and convinced him to have the documents come out after they had been looked at by a couple news organizations. *The New York Times* came in after *The Guardian* and one of my colleagues went to London to begin to look at the documents and quickly found that it was far more than a one-person job and then they brought a team of about five of us to begin looking at them. ... You had a couple different news organizations that are typically very competitive that had access to all of the same documents. Now what we didn't do

was share all of our analysis or conclusions or make sure that we all on the same page of what we were concluding in the documents. We came to our own conclusions."

What the Obama administration said about the documents before they were published:

"The public statements have been very angry about the release, calling it a 'breach of law' and have said that this is incredibly unhelpful for the war effort. In fairness to them, they didn't have the documents when we approached them. We didn't give [the documents] to [the Obama administration]. So they were in discussions. Their discussions with us was whether we were going to get any White House officials to talk or not and if not, when their statements are going to come out. We didn't have extensive discussions — we went in, we told them we had the documents, we told them what we were asking for and they said they'd get back to us. So I do think that the White House has said that they thought that the *Times* had handled the situation responsibly in the sense that the *Times* was not putting every single piece of information out and I think they appreciated the head's up that we gave them — that we had the documents. We didn't do it just to give them a head's up. We wanted information and to speak to them and to answer questions about what these documents revealed."



WikiLeaks Organization Sparks Controversy



Wikileaks founder Julian Assange speaks at a news conference at the Frontline Club in central London, Monday, July 26. Raw government documents on the Afghanistan war released by the Wikileaks website added credence to the widely-made charge that Pakistan underhandedly supports the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan.

Andrew Winning/Reuters

Jennifer Glasse | London 27 July 2010

WikiLeaks is a website that posts formerly secret documents online in what its members say is the pursuit of transparency and accountability. Its release of more than 75,000 U.S. Army and Marine Corps documents chronicling six years of events in Afghanistan has angered officials in Washington, Britain and Pakistan.

The WikiLeaks website says the organization began as a dialogue between activists who wanted to alleviate suffering. It says the organization champions "principled leaking."

Since 2007 WikiLeaks has posted thousands of documents on the internet. Founder Julian Assange sees himself as an information activist whose main goal is to get information into the public domain. He says he has a small, overworked staff, about 800 part time workers and thousands of supporters.

"I suppose our greatest fear is we will be too successful too fast, and we will not be able to do justice to the material we are getting in fast enough," said Assange. "That is our greatest problem at the moment."

WikiLeaks is non-profit and Assange says during the past few months there has been tremendous financial support.

"We have raised a million dollars from the general public. As a result we are enabled to have a

sort of fierce independence that larger organizations find more difficult. That said, of course, we are also immediately accountable to the public because that is where our money comes from, directly from the public, not from advertisers or foundations," said Assange.

Simon Schneider, who runs a competition to find new internet technology to improve global security, says WikiLeaks main strength is protecting its sources.

"The fact that it is so controversial and the fact that so many people talk about it tells me that WikiLeaks touches on a very, very important point," said Schneider. "And I think that this discussion between what should be private and what should be public touches a lot of peoples nerves, and I think it is important that we talk about it."

But former intelligence analyst Bob Ayers is not convinced WikiLeaks is a force for good.

"The fact that we have a bunch of liberal amateurs trying to do intelligence assessments of material does not give me a strong feeling of confidence," said Ayers.

Ayers cites WikiLeaks most recent revelations, the release of more than 75,000 U.S. military documents relating to Afghanistan.

"The information that was released is not a threat to the United States per se," said Ayers. "It has the potential to be a threat to combatants that are fighting in the area, it has the potential to destabilize the trilateral relationships between Afghanistan, Pakistan and the U.S. And it has the potential to place the intelligence community at some level of risk if their sources are being compromised publicly."

WikiLeaks founder Assange says his organization has a harm-minimization process to identify, redact or withhold anything that might hurt a source or anyone involved in the documents. Assange says for that reason, they did not release more than 15,000 Afghanistan-related documents, and he says because what they did make public was seven months old, he believed it contained no information that could harm NATO troops.

Ayers disagrees. "The fact it is seven months old is immaterial. It is irrelevant. They are not going to change their patrolling patterns in seven months, they are still going to patrol the same way. So now what you have done is you have informed the enemy of information that can assist them in planning how to attack NATO forces in Afghanistan when they are on patrol," said Ayers.

Ayers believes the American government will have to do something about WikiLeaks. Under U.S. law it is illegal to disclose classified information.

"There is a real dilemma here as to how to deal with a site like WikiLeaks," said Ayers. "Are they acting in the public good? Are they acting sensationally? Are they endangering the public good? Are they endangering lives by their actions? And those are things that I think we will still see addressed and sorted out over the next six months or so."

To thwart censorship, WikiLeaks released the leaked documents in three jurisdictions, the United States, Germany and Great Britain.

In more stable eras, Afghan governments have talked of a “Greater Afghanistan” that includes Pashtun lands in Pakistan, and have openly refused to accept the 1893 [Durand Line](#) that forms the border between the two countries. Such conversation is dead for now in Afghanistan as the country tries to get on its feet.

Pakistani Taliban have killed numerous Pashtun tribal elders and leaders of the Awami National Party, a Pashtun nationalist party in Pakistan that at one time espoused separatism but now calls only for greater autonomy from Islamabad.

As the Pakistani Taliban grew in strength, US officials argued that the group was a threat to the Pakistani state and since the spring of 2009, Islamabad has gone on the offensive against the Pakistani Taliban. But it has largely left the Afghan Taliban alone.

The notable exception was the roundup by Pakistani forces of [half the Quetta Shura](#), the leadership of Mullah Omar’s faction of the Taliban. The exact reasons for this remain unclear, but the consensus guess among experts is that Pakistan got wind of backroom talks between the Shura and Kabul, which did not involve Islamabad.

Pakistan wants to be involved in the shaping of events in Afghanistan after an eventual US withdrawal.

“Given that they don’t expect the Taliban to be defeated, and given that they are not interested in chaos in Afghanistan, it follows that they will maintain close relations with and support for the Taliban,” writes Mr. Friedman. Yet, Islamabad cannot be open about that because the US is an important ally. “The only rational policy for Pakistan is two-tiered, consisting of overt opposition to the Taliban and covert support for the Taliban.”

However, heavily supporting the Taliban does not necessarily translate to a more stable Afghanistan once the US leaves. When the Soviet military withdrew in 1989, its highly unpopular puppet government held out several years against insurgents.

Top Pakistan analyst Christine Fair says astute Pakistanis realize that a US withdrawal won’t mean a quick Taliban return but a long, messy struggle.

That could mean finding ways to bring some Taliban back into a coalition government – rather than supporting an overthrow by the Taliban.

The powerful Pakistani Army chief, Ashraf Kiyani, has said in recent months that an old doctrine known as “strategic depth” – whereby an Afghan client state could help Pakistan in the event of an Indian invasion – now simply means Pakistan is looking for a sympathetic government in Kabul. “We want a strategic depth in Afghanistan but do not want to control it.”

Voice of America News

Wikileaks reinforces the claim that Pakistan supports the Taliban

The Wikileaks documents add credence to the widely-made charge that Pakistan underhandedly supports the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan. Why would Pakistan do that?

By [Ben Arnoldy](#), Staff Writer / July 27, 2010
Jammu City, India controlled Kashmir

Raw government documents on the Afghanistan war released by the Wikileaks website added credence to the widely-made charge that [Pakistan underhandedly supports Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan](#). [Pakistani](#) generals have regularly [dismissed the idea of collaboration with the Taliban](#). "We would obviously like to fix these rogues. They are killing our own people and are certainly not friends of this country," General Ahmed Shuja Pasha was quoted in a 2009 book as saying.

Yet Pakistan does have compelling state interest that could argue for support of the Taliban.

Briefing: Who are the Taliban?

For decades, Pakistan has worked to ensure its western border with Afghanistan is safe so that it could focus on its eastern border with arch-rival India.

A Taliban-influenced government in Kabul would help Pakistan deal with some of its biggest internal and external threats. The Taliban would side with Pakistan against India, rather than sandwich Pakistan between two unfriendly governments. They would also remove the threat of support from Kabul for Pashtun and Baloch ethnic separatism within Pakistan.

"For Pakistan, an Afghanistan under Pakistani influence or at least a benign [Afghanistan](#) is a matter of overriding strategic importance," writes George Friedman, head of the Austin, Tex.-based intelligence group Stratfor.

"The region's main ethnic group, the Pashtun, stretch across the Afghan-Pakistani border. Moreover, were a hostile force present in Afghanistan ... Pakistan would face threats in the west as well as the challenge posed by India in the east."

In the 1990s, Pakistani intelligence was the “angel investor” for the startup Taliban movement. Islamabad stuck with Mullah Omar and his band as they seized Kabul and much of the country, drew the ire of the international community, and were recognized by only two other foreign governments.

When the US came into Afghanistan on the heels of 9/11, it worked through anti-Taliban warlords – factions long supported by India. The government in Kabul still draws heavily from these factions.

While there have been rapprochement efforts between Kabul and Islamabad recently, Afghan President Hamid Karzai is limited in this effort by his governing coalition. Two of his top security ministers have quit over the issue.

On President Karzai’s watch, India has poured money into reconstruction projects and opened new consulates in Afghanistan. Conspiracy theorists in Pakistan claim some of these are used to support ethnic separatists in the Pakistani province of [Balochistan](#).

Pakistan’s bigger ethnic worry about Karzai’s government is Karzai himself. He is a Pashtun, but he does not play the Islam card for his power. The Taliban does. The group, which is made up almost entirely of Pashtuns, makes Islamic – not ethnic – claims to power.

The Wall Street Journal

ASIA NEWS
JULY 27, 2010

Afghan War Leak Sets Off Effort to Control Damage

By SIOBHAN GORMAN, JONATHAN WEISMAN And JULIAN E. BARNES

WASHINGTON—White House officials, already on the defensive over Afghan war strategy, scrambled over the weekend to keep an impending leak of a trove of secret military documents from eroding the support of Pakistan, a key ally, for U.S. operations against al Qaeda and related militant groups.

The outreach to Pakistani officials before the publication of the documents Sunday was part of a broader White House effort to stem the impact of the publication by online organization WikiLeaks of 76,000 reports spanning more than five years of the war in Afghanistan.

Some congressional Democrats have already been in quiet revolt over the Obama administration's war strategy, and the depiction of the war in the documents supported their concerns, lawmakers and congressional officials said.

The documents offered few new revelations and are mostly made up of raw and possibly faulty intelligence. But the volume of the secret military reports and the drama of their release gave prominence to worries about the war.

The administration was most concerned about documents that suggested Pakistan's intelligence service was aiding the Taliban, which have the potential to disrupt precarious relations with Islamabad. Other sensitive disclosures included documents describing secret strikes by special operations teams against Taliban leaders; accounts of civilian casualties, a sore spot in the effort to win Afghan popular support for the war; and fresh allegations of Iranian ties to al Qaeda.

On Sunday, U.S. envoy to Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke called Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari with a direct message: The Obama administration didn't condone the leak, so "please don't see this as some great conspiracy," a senior Pakistani official said. U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Anne Patterson placed a follow-up call to Mr. Zardari. Senior administration officials confirmed those calls. Meanwhile, Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, called Pakistan's Army chief Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, and U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Karl Eikenberry called President Hamid Karzai to smooth those feathers, a senior administration official said.

"The biggest American concern yesterday was: How will the Pakistanis take it?" said the senior Pakistani official, in an assessment U.S. officials didn't contradict. "Their concern was not what

the leaks said but what the effect would be on the allies." U.S. officials also called their counterparts in the U.K. and Germany.

The full impact of the leak will likely begin to emerge this week as the House of Representatives debates the administration's request for additional funding for the Afghanistan war.

Antiwar lawmakers said they hoped new documents would accelerate their colleagues' growing doubts. Rep. Jane Harman (D., Calif.), who has been supportive of the war effort, said: "The reports reinforce what many of us believe—the war is not going as well as hoped and some in Pakistan are playing both sides."

The broader political response was somewhat muted, however, and Democratic leaders in Congress echoed the White House's line that details in the documents weren't surprising.

Deputy National Security Adviser Benjamin Rhodes, White House press secretary Robert Gibbs and assistant press secretary Tommy Vietor met representatives of the New York Times Thursday, White House aides said. The Times, with the U.K.'s Guardian and Germany's Der Spiegel, had early access to the leak and published its analysis online Sunday.

The officials also tried to reach leaders of WikiLeaks, but their emails and calls weren't returned. Mr. Gibbs passed a message to WikiLeaks via the Times requesting that compromising information be redacted. White House aides said they didn't try to talk the Times out of publishing the reports because they knew WikiLeaks would publish the information regardless.

Geoff Morrell, Pentagon press secretary, said the Defense Department had made progress on many of the issues raised in the documents, including cooperation with Pakistan in fighting militants.

"There is nothing that has been raised that will be a surprise to someone who reads the newspaper every day. They are issues we have recognized as problems and have been working to fix," Mr. Morrell said.

Military investigators are examining computers used by Bradley Manning, a U.S. Army intelligence analyst charged this month in a separate leak, to see if he is a source of Sunday's documents.

Pfc. Manning's military defense team didn't respond to requests seeking comment.

Pfc. Manning was stationed in Iraq, but investigators are trying to determine what material he could access and what material he may have transferred.

Pentagon spokesman Col. Dave Lapan said Pfc. Manning was a person of interest in the investigation to determine where the material was taken from.

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, at a news conference in London Monday, declined to reveal his source. Asked about Pfc. Manning, he said: "There is no allegation as far as we can determine" that the documents posted on WikiLeaks Sunday are "connected to Bradley Manning."

He said WikiLeaks has "committed funds" to Pfc. Manning's legal defense, offering his military-appointed legal team money in case it wants to hire civilian counsel.

The earlier charges against Pfc. Manning appear to be connected to the leak of a classified video WikiLeaks released to the public. It depicts the July 2007 killing of two Reuters journalists and other individuals in Iraq by Apache helicopter gunships.

Military and intelligence experts who reviewed Sunday's leaked materials said the information posted—incident reports that often read like a police blotter—was probably culled from the Secret Internet Protocol Router Network, also known as SIPRNet. That is a military computer system primarily used for handling the "day-to-day business" of military operations in Afghanistan, according to one former intelligence official.

A wide range of people in any number of locations could have accessed the data. SIPRNet handles information classed up to the level of "secret," a basic level of classification that doesn't include most sensitive intelligence information. The former officer stressed that much SIPRNet traffic included unfiltered information that is "not proven, it's not vetted."

But the the leak could damage the cooperation the U.S. has been receiving from the Pakistanis, said Brookings Institution scholar Bruce Riedel, a former Central Intelligence Agency officer who oversaw the U.S. government's Afghanistan-Pakistan policy review last year. "The leaked documents will discourage intelligence sources from trusting American intelligence can keep a secret," he said.

The Pakistani official said the leaks come "at a bad time." Only recently have some members of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence spy agency, an organization that has nurtured Taliban ties, begun to support joint counterterrorism operations.

In Afghanistan, the government of President Karzai zeroed in on the reported Pakistani support for the Taliban-led insurgency, hoping it would persuade the White House to ratchet up pressure on Pakistan to go after militants across the border. Some officials in Pakistan see the leak of the documents as an attempt to force Pakistan's military to launch an offensive against the Taliban-allied Haqqani Network militant group in the North Waziristan tribal region.

"There is nothing new in these allegations. These are only meant to step up pressure on Pakistan," said a senior Pakistani army officer.

The Afghan government also seized on concerns from the reports about civilian casualties Monday—a day that Afghan officials said a coalition rocket strike in Helmand province resulted in the deaths of "up to 52 innocent civilians," according to Afghanistan. The U.S.-led coalition said it had no record of targeting the village.

For the most part, military officials declined to comment on specific charges within the documents. But they did push back against the contention that surface-to-air missiles were being used by the Taliban. One of the leaked documents was a 2007 report that said a surface-to-air missile was used in 2007 to take down a CH-47 helicopter.

Officials said they were investigating whether a surface-to-air missile was used in that attack, but said if it was used that was an isolated incident.

—Nathan Hodge, Laura Meckler, Naftali Bendavid, Maria Abi-Habib, Yaroslav Trofimov and Jeanne Whalen contributed to this article.

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Council on Foreign Relations

Time to Talk to the Taliban?

Interviewee: Matt Waldman, Independent Afghan Analyst; Former Fellow, Harvard University's Carr Center for Human Rights Policy

Interviewer: [Greg Bruno](#), Staff Writer, CFR.org

July 27, 2010



As the United States seeks to regain the initiative in the Afghan war, U.S. and Afghan officials are considering ways to lure militants away from the fight. Appeasement and reconciliation talks with Taliban fighters is one approach, as are efforts to empower local defense forces and broader attempts to negotiate ceasefires with senior Taliban commanders. But [Matt Waldman](#), an independent Afghan analyst who has studied the insurgency since 2006, warns that a general misunderstanding of why Afghans fight is undermining current

efforts. One example, he says, are [preconditions for reconciliation \(NYT\)](#) set by the Afghan government, including a requirement that fighters renounce violence, embrace the Afghan constitution, and pledge allegiance to a peaceful state. "They are effectively asking for surrender, and surrender is not reconciliation," Waldman says. "If we insist on those preconditions, I can guarantee you there will be no meaningful reconciliation process."

- Waldman, who has written extensively about [reconciliation efforts \(PDF\)](#), as well as [Pakistan's ties to the Taliban \(PDF\)](#), says the United States should consider immediate talks with Taliban fighters of all stripes.
- **You've done a lot of work looking at whether so-called reconciliation can work. First, talk about the drivers pushing Afghans to fight.**
- There's broad agreement that the lot of the foot soldiers wouldn't be fighting if it weren't for the fact that they were living in very difficult circumstances. They were unemployed and finding it hard to feed their families and of course, that brings with it social stigma, which is partly addressed through the insurgency, which provides a sense of purpose and status. But it's clear that the factors that actually prompted people, individuals, to join the insurgency were more immediate than just economics. More immediate or fundamental causes [are] the conduct of foreign forces . . . leading to a belief that foreign forces were here for hostile purposes. Many of the drivers [also] relate to the conduct of the government and government officials.
- **President Hamid Karzai's government has spelled out what it is looking for in reconciliation efforts. Notably, Afghan talks will begin only with those who renounce violence and have no links to international terrorist organizations, among other issues. It's a lot of requirements for fighters that appear to be winning. Is this program realistic?**

- The preconditions that have been set by the international community [and outlined by the Karzai government] are overambitious and unrealistic. They are effectively asking for surrender, and surrender is not reconciliation. If we insist on those preconditions, I can guarantee you there will be no meaningful reconciliation process. There may be scope for what is called reconciliation, although there are different interpretations of what reconciliation actually is.
- **How is reconciliation defined in all its various permutations?**
- [T]he preconditions that have been set down by the international community are overambitious and unrealistic. They are effectively asking for surrender, and surrender is not reconciliation.
- Some U.S. officials see it as a sort of high-level reintegration whereby individual insurgents and perhaps their factions come over to the government's side. In that sense, they see it as a tool of counterinsurgency designed to weaken and divide the enemy. Others see it as a means of securing perhaps some sort of deal with insurgent leaders which would enable international troops to withdraw. [And] others see it as a process that seeks to address the grievances and conflicts that exist between many different factions and groups within Afghan society, including between insurgent groups and the current administration, to try to establish a more sustainable political settlement and one certainly that is more inclusive.
- At the moment, there is too little coherence about reconciliation. So long as the insurgents do not believe that the United States is serious about reconciliation, they will not take it seriously. There's got to be, and indeed I believe there will be, a change of attitude and a more coherent policy position. The United States for the time being has taken a backseat and has given some tentative support to President Karzai and his outreach activities and his discussions with Pakistani military and intelligence teams, but ultimately it has to go further than that. There has got to be engagement with the armed opposition to establish whether there is the possibility of [creating] some sort of structured process of talks to see whether the issues driving this conflict can be addressed. The reconciliation process is fraught with challenges and risks, but if conditions continue to deteriorate, there may be few other options.
- **The immediate focus for the United States and the international forces seems to be improving security before dealing with Afghanistan's politics. One example is the recent push by General David Petraeus to stand up local defense forces (NYT), something Karzai has resisted. Is this the right approach?**
- The weight of opinion in Washington seems to be that America can only negotiate from a position of strength. I have to say that the conditions on the ground indicate that it may not be possible for America to achieve a position of greater strength. Given the illegitimacy of the government and the weakness of the police and, to some extent, the army; the record-high casualty figures to our international forces; the sustained campaign by the insurgents who have been increasingly effective; and also this systematic campaign of intimidation and threats against the Afghan population--abhorrent but highly effective--these facts raise the question of whether it is indeed possible for the United States to achieve a position of greater strength. The evidence seems to be that it actually is deepening the mistrust between the insurgents and the U.S. and the Afghan government, that it is increasing animosity, and that the successful

attacks on commanders and insurgent leaders is generating younger militants who, in many cases, are more extreme and perhaps less likely to support peace talks.

- **Given all this, are talks even possible, now or in the future?**
- Now is the time to take the broad reconciliation agenda seriously, and now is the time to engage with the armed opposition. If their demands are so utterly incompatible with both Afghan and international aspirations for Afghanistan, then we may be left with no choice [but to engage militarily]. But let us see. Given the [international forces'] difficulty of achieving a position of strength, and given that the idea of talks is broadly supported by the Afghan population, it must be right to try to take that forward. And the United States needs to support that.
- **On Sunday, the online organization WikiLeaks released a trove of Afghan war documents that, among other things, raises questions about Pakistan's role in Afghan instability. You authored a [report \(PDF\)](#) just last month looking at Pakistan's ties to the Taliban. What's in it strategically for Pakistan, and how might Pakistani activities complicate Washington's objectives in Afghanistan?**
- Counterinsurgency in these conditions cannot succeed as it's currently configured, principally because you have a host government that is largely seen as ineffective, weak, illegitimate, corrupt, and even predatory.
- In terms of why Pakistan is acting as they are--well, I would reiterate that I don't think this is conclusive evidence, but there's an awful lot of circumstantial evidence here that points in that direction. We have to take it seriously while acknowledging that it is not conclusive. One has to conclude that it is predominantly attributable to the latent conflict which India. [And] we perhaps underestimate the intensity of that rivalry. We kind of forget that there have been three wars and a number of other clashes between the two nations, [including] the Mumbai bombing in 2008 that killed 266 individuals. If you see Pakistan's activities that through that sort of paradigm, you [get] an explanation as to why they may be providing this support and sanctuary.
- **In your report you questioned whether Pakistan can or should be seen as an effective U.S. partner if this kind of circumstantial evidence keeps surfacing. Should it? Does the United States have a choice?**
- I certainly don't think it's a case of just one thing or another. But I do believe that America does have a choice about the way it engages with Pakistan and the way it approaches the conflict in Afghanistan--in particular, the role Pakistan plays. It requires a very careful use of incentives and disincentives, and disincentives might include perhaps not being as generous as America is with funding. The other issue is the United States [could] take an active and proactive role in seeking to improve relations between India and Pakistan, encouraging and facilitating and supporting efforts to try to move forward on the issue of Kashmir. If there was a concerted, determined effort to try to support that, there is potential [for a breakthrough]. The United States might be able to play a role in persuading India not to have quite such a significant perceived presence [in Afghanistan], which reinforces the fear of some officials in Pakistan.
- I don't believe that these steps are being pursued with sufficient vigor. If we see positive momentum in the Pakistan-India relationship, then that could have an extremely beneficial knock-on effect on Afghanistan.

- **In addition to the Pakistan intelligence service-Taliban connection, the WikiLeaks documents provide a rich mosaic of field reports and assessments that offer a grim look at the Afghan war. What do you think the fallout of the reports will be--in Afghanistan and the West?**
- It depends on your perspective. I do think that the documents that were leaked really don't portray anything that would be new to Afghans. There are some details I was not aware of, [but] it all is consistent with the reports that I have from talking to Afghans in villages, communities, different parts of the country, whether it's in the west or south or north, and whether it's these attacks that killed civilians or the corrupt police officials or the support provided by the ISI [Pakistan intelligence]. All of that is something that if you're talking to ordinary Afghans, you hear quite commonly.
- What this may do is to perhaps affect the judgment of Western publics, because it perhaps brings home to them the very severe challenges that are faced in the course of this campaign. For me, it did demonstrate, very clearly, that counterinsurgency in these conditions cannot succeed as it's currently configured, principally because you have a host government that is largely seen as ineffective, weak, illegitimate, corrupt, and even predatory. And you have the insurgents having a sanctuary and significant support outside of the country. In those conditions, one [must] accept that counterinsurgency cannot succeed, [which raises] a question, "What is the right strategy to move forward?" [The challenges detailed in the documents] reinforce the need for a political process which is inclusive and which seeks to engage the various parties in this conflict, as well as of course the Afghan people themselves to try and address some of the sources of the conflict.

The Wall Street Journal

ASIA NEWS
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Leaks Bolster Afghans' Complaints

By **MARIA ABI-HABIB** And **YAROSLAV TROFIMOV**

KABUL—The Afghan government, in its initial reaction to the leak of 75,000 internal U.S. military documents about the war, zeroed in on reported Pakistani support for the Taliban-led insurgency—hoping that the disclosures, and the resulting public outcry, would force Washington to turn up pressure on Islamabad.

WSJ Afghanistan correspondent Matthew Rosenberg speaks with Amol Sharma about the significance of the leak of thousands of documents related to the Afghanistan war and the possible effects on the perception of the war among American and Afghani citizens.

Kabul also used the leaked reports of previously undisclosed civilian casualties to demand further restraints on coalition rules of engagement. The documents were posted by WikiLeaks, an organization dedicated to public disclosure, shortly before the Afghan government said Monday that "up to" 52 Afghan civilians have been killed in a coalition rocket attack on a village in southern Helmand province.

"The recent documents leaked out to the media clearly support and verify Afghanistan's all-time position that success over terrorism does not come with fighting in Afghan villages, but by targeting its sanctuaries and financial and ideological sources across the borders," Afghan President Hamid Karzai said in a statement. "Our efforts against terrorism will have no effect as long as these sanctuaries and sources remain intact."

Most of the civilian deaths described in the documents happened before the former U.S. and coalition commander, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, drastically tightened the rules of engagement last year—a fact noted with appreciation at a Monday press conference by President Karzai's spokesman, Waheed Omar. The U.S.-led coalition said Monday it is sending a team to look into the latest "allegations of significant civilian casualties" in Helmand's Sangin district, which is overseen by British troops.

Though much of the information in the WikiLeaks documents is already known, Mr. Omar said that the Afghan government is "shocked" that such a huge amount of classified data—some of it detailing confidential conversations between U.S., Afghan and Pakistani officials—has now been made public.

President Karzai's administration has been insisting for years that the Taliban derive significant support from parts of the Pakistani military and intelligence establishments, an assessment flatly rejected as malicious by the Pakistani authorities.

While many in the U.S. government also believe that Pakistani backing for the Afghan insurgency is critical, American officials—careful of maintaining a delicate diplomatic relationship with the nuclear-armed nation—do not usually level such accusations in public. The WikiLeaks documents, most of them low-level messages sent by U.S. military units in Afghanistan, blow away this pretense—illustrating that American officers on the ground often see compelling evidence of Pakistani complicity in the Taliban attacks.

"Pakistan has managed to get rewarded for its bad behavior—even though the U.S. has untold proof that the Pakistanis are not collaborating with the U.S. in the war on terror," says Haroun Mir, director of the Afghanistan Center for Research and Policy Studies, a think-tank in Kabul. "It may have been necessary to leak this information: it's not a war just against irregular fighters, but one also involving Pakistan that is at the same time an ally and an enemy. It's time for Americans to start learning the truth."

Alarmed by fading U.S. public support for the war, President Karzai in recent months has attempted to reach out to Pakistan, offering negotiations with the Taliban and dismissing Afghanistan's intelligence chief, Amrullah Saleh, who was perceived in Islamabad as particularly hostile to Pakistani interests. U.S. officials have also been holding discussions with the Pakistani army chief of staff, Gen. Ashfaq Kayani, about how Pakistan could help end the war, allowing a U.S. military withdrawal.

Some Afghan lawmakers and officials estimated that the Wikileaks disclosure would prompt President Karzai to assume once again a more confrontational stance with Islamabad. "This is a golden opportunity for Karzai. He can now say 'we told you all along' to NATO and demand more support and funding," said parliamentarian Shukria Barakzai. "Everyone here knows that a lot of U.S. aid money for Pakistan to build schools or hospitals never gets delivered, but goes to work against the U.S. in Afghanistan."

Others were more skeptical. "The relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan will not change," said lawmaker Daud Sultanzoi. "Afghanistan realizes that the U.S. will withdraw and that Afghanistan will have to deal with Pakistan as a neighbor."

If anything, the leak may actually further damage whatever cooperation the U.S. has been receiving from the Pakistanis, says Brookings Institution scholar Bruce Riedel, a former Central Intelligence Agency officer who oversaw the U.S. government's Afghanistan-Pakistan policy review last year.

"The leaked documents will discourage intelligence sources from trusting American intelligence can keep a secret," he says. "It will add more strains to the already strained ties with the Pakistani army. A tough intel challenge has been made harder still."

—Habib Zahori contributed to this article.

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The New York Times
July 26, 2010

Document Leak May Hurt Efforts to Build War Support

By [ERIC SCHMITT](#) and [HELENE COOPER](#)

WASHINGTON — The disclosure of a six-year archive of [classified military documents](#) increased pressure on [President Obama](#) to defend his military strategy as Congress prepares to deliberate financing of the Afghanistan war.

The disclosures, with their detailed account of a war faring even more poorly than two administrations had portrayed, landed at a crucial moment. Because of difficulties on the ground and mounting casualties in the war, the debate over the American presence in Afghanistan has begun earlier than expected. Inside the administration, more officials are privately questioning the policy.

In Congress, House leaders were rushing to hold a vote on a critical war-financing bill as early as Tuesday, fearing that the disclosures could stoke Democratic opposition to the measure. A Senate panel is also set to hold a hearing on Tuesday on Mr. Obama's choice to head the military's Central Command, [Gen. James N. Mattis](#), who would oversee military operations in Afghanistan.

Administration officials acknowledged that the documents, released on the Internet by an organization called [WikiLeaks](#), will make it harder for Mr. Obama as he tries to hang on to public and Congressional support until the end of the year, when he has scheduled a review of the war effort.

"We don't know how to react," one frustrated administration official said on Monday. "This obviously puts Congress and the public in a bad mood."

Mr. Obama is facing a tough choice: he must either figure out a way to convince Congress and the American people that his war strategy remains on track and is seeing fruit — a harder sell given that the war is lagging — or move more quickly to a far more limited American presence.

As the debate over the war begins anew, administration officials have been striking tones similar to the Bush administration's to argue for continuing the current Afghanistan strategy, which calls for a significant troop buildup. [Richard C. Holbrooke](#), Mr. Obama's special representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan, said the Afghan war

effort came down to a matter of American national security, in testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee two weeks ago.

The White House press secretary, [Robert Gibbs](#), struck a similar note on Monday in responding to the documents, which WikiLeaks made accessible to The New York Times, the British newspaper The Guardian and the German magazine Der Spiegel.

“We are in this region of the world because of what happened on 9/11,” Mr. Gibbs said. “Ensuring that there is not a safe haven in Afghanistan by which attacks against this country and countries around the world can be planned. That’s why we’re there, and that’s why we’re going to continue to make progress on this relationship.”

Several administration officials privately expressed hope that they might be able to use the leaks, and their description of a [sometimes duplicitous Pakistani ally](#), to pressure the government of Pakistan to cooperate more fully with the United States on counterterrorism. The documents seem to lay out rich new details of connections between the [Taliban](#) and other militant groups and Pakistan’s main spy agency, the Directorate for [Inter-Services Intelligence](#), or ISI.

Three administration officials separately expressed hope that they might be able to use the documents to gain leverage in efforts to get more help from Pakistan. Two of them raised the possibility of warning the Pakistanis that Congressional anger might threaten American aid.

“This is now out in the open,” a senior administration official said. “It’s reality now. In some ways, it makes it easier for us to tell the Pakistanis that they have to help us.”

But much of the pushback from the White House over the past two days has been to stress that the connection between the ISI and the Taliban was well known.

“I don’t think that what is being reported hasn’t in many ways been publicly discussed, either by you all or by representatives of the U.S. government, for quite some time,” Mr. Gibbs said during a briefing on Monday.

While agreeing that the disclosures were not altogether new, some leading Democrats said that the new details underscored deep suspicions they have harbored toward the ISI.

“Some of these documents reinforce a longstanding concern of mine about the supporting role of some Pakistani officials in the Afghan insurgency,” said Senator [Carl Levin](#), a Michigan Democrat who heads the Armed Services Committee. During a visit to Pakistan this month, Mr. Levin, who has largely supported the war, said he confronted senior Pakistani leaders about the ISI’s continuing ties to the militant groups.

And others said that the documents should serve as an impetus to correct deficiencies in strategy.

“Those policies are at a critical stage, and these documents may very well underscore the stakes and make the calibrations needed to get the policy right more urgent,” said Senator [John Kerry](#), a Massachusetts Democrat who is the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and has been an influential supporter of the war.

The White House appeared to be focusing some of its ire toward [Julian Assange](#), the founder of WikiLeaks.org, the Web site that provided access to about 92,000 secret military reports spanning the period from January 2004 through December 2009.

White House officials e-mailed reporters select transcripts of an interview Mr. Assange conducted with Der Spiegel, underlining the quotations the White House apparently found most offensive. Among them was Mr. Assange’s assertion, “I enjoy crushing bastards.”

At a news conference in London on Monday, Mr. Assange defended the release of the documents. “I’d like to see this material taken seriously and investigated, and new policies, if not prosecutions, result from it,” he said.

The Times and the two other news organizations agreed not to disclose anything that was likely to put lives at risk or jeopardize military or antiterrorist operations, and The Times [redacted the names](#) of Afghan informants and other delicate information from the documents it published. WikiLeaks said it withheld posting about 15,000 documents for the same reason.

Pakistan strongly denied suggestions that its military spy service has guided the Afghan insurgency.

A senior ISI official, speaking on the condition of anonymity under standard practice, sharply condemned the reports as “part of the malicious campaign to malign the spy organization” and said the ISI would “continue to eradicate the menace of terrorism with or without the help of the West.”

Farhatullah Babar, the spokesman for President [Asif Ali Zardari](#) of Pakistan, dismissed the reports and said that Pakistan remained “a part of a strategic alliance of the United States in the fight against terrorism.”

While Pakistani officials protested, a spokesman for the Afghan president, [Hamid Karzai](#), said that Mr. Karzai was not upset by the documents and did not believe the picture they painted was unfair.

Speaking after a news conference in Kabul, Mr. Karzai’s spokesman, Waheed Omar, was asked whether there was anything in the leaked documents that angered Mr. Karzai or that he thought unfair. “No, I don’t think so,” Mr. Omar said.

Reporting was contributed by Adam B. Ellick and Salman Masood from Islamabad, Pakistan; Richard A. Oppel Jr. from Kabul, Afghanistan; and Caroline Crampton from London.

guardian.co.uk.

Wikileaks documents suggest Taliban has capacity to fire on aircraft

Coalition forces have long claimed that Afghan insurgents could not obtain the technology required to shoot down planes

[Jon Boone](#) in Kabul and [Richard Norton-Taylor](#)
[guardian.co.uk](#), Monday 26 July 2010 22.09 BST



Wikileaks documents suggest that incidences of the Taliban firing on US aircraft have been suppressed from public record. Photograph: Ghaith Abdul-Ahad

The legendary ability of small, shoulder-born missile launchers to transform the fortunes of otherwise crudely armed insurgents is one of the most alarming threats to emerge from [the Wikileaks archive](#).

Soviet troops discovered in 1986 when the CIA decided to put heat-seeking Stinger missiles into the hands of the otherwise low-tech Afghan resistance, such weapons can make life impossible for modern armies.

As depicted in the Tom Hank's film Charlie Wilson's War, bearded warriors were able to stand on hilltops and blast the dreaded Russian attack helicopters out of the sky, ultimately forcing them to fly far higher, to much less effect.

That image still haunts Nato commanders who are all too aware of how much they rely on thousands of transport planes, helicopters and drone surveillance craft to kill insurgents from the air and move troops around an increasingly hostile theatre of war.

It has long been the international coalition's claim that whilst the [Taliban](#) might try to acquire technology capable of shooting down aircraft they had failed to do so, and were unlikely to ever succeed.

Nonetheless, the risk is taken extremely seriously and the sight of distraction flares blasting out of the side of military helicopters are a regular sight in the skies above [Afghanistan](#). The countermeasures, designed to confuse the heat seeking cone of the missile, are so sensitively calibrated they can be easily set off by a false alarm. But according to the [WikiLeaks](#) documents, there have been several cases of insurgents firing on US aircraft, all of which have been suppressed from the public record.

In May 2007 a US Chinook was hit by a missile in Helmand after it had departed from the Kajaki base in the north of the province, killing everyone on board, although the US claimed it had been downed by lucky shot from a rocket propelled grenade (RPG) which has no heat seeking capability.

The previous month the crew of a British Chinook had reported a missile flying 50ft past the aircraft before exploding. In July 2007, the crew of a C-130 transport plane reported that they had seen a rocket fly past them whilst they were refuelling at 11,000 feet. That event was actually reported by British journalist Tom Coghlan who quoted a military spokesman who said any such incidents were classified and could not be commented on.

An official at HQ ISAF said he too was unable to comment on any incident involving anti-aircraft missiles.

It is not clear why the coalition is so reluctant to publicly admit the risks posed to coalition aircraft by missiles.

British defence officials said there was no evidence of weapons bigger than RPGs being fired at helicopters, but insurgents are making greater efforts to shoot down helicopters, which they believe have great propaganda value for them.

"There is much greater focus on carefully coordinated attacks on helicopters by RPGs [rocket propelled grenades] or small arms", a Ministry of Defence source said. The insurgents "are constantly watching us and adapting their tactics", said a senior military official.

In the latest incident an American Cobra helicopter was shot at in Marjah in central Helmand province, sources told the Guardian.

David Cameron was forced last month to abandon a visit to British troops in Helmand province after an intelligence report suggested the Taliban was plotting to target an unnamed VIP. The

prime minister's Chinook helicopter diverted after five minutes in the air when the information was received.

Until very recently intelligence officials have argued that there was little risk that heat-seeking missiles ever be acquired by the Taliban, although the released military intelligence includes numerous reports of insurgent groups in individual provinces who were thought to have the capability as early as 2005.

A western diplomat recently told the Guardian that the Taliban could not access such weapons because they are not freely available on the black market run by the world's private arms dealers.

Another obvious source would be foreign government's hostile to the US occupation in Afghanistan, with perhaps the most likely source being neighbouring Iran.

According to one unconfirmed April 1 2004 intelligence report, seven anti-aircraft missiles, originally acquired in Algeria, were sneaked over the porous Afghan border.

But one intelligence source told the Guardian that although Shia Iran is happy to provide limited support to insurgents, it would never want to see such weapons in the hands of a Sunni movement which it nearly went to war with in 1998 when the Taliban killed ten Iranian diplomats.

Another possibility is that the missiles were rare leftovers from the original stock of some 2,000-2,500 Stingers distributed to the mujahideen by the CIA.

Even though the missile launchers are unlikely to work because their batteries degrade over time, the CIA made a big effort in the 1990s trying to recover as many Stingers as possible, offering between \$80,000 and \$150,000 per weapon in a buyback programme.

REPORTED BY MATTHIAS GEBAUER, JOHN GOETZ, HANS HOYNG, SUSANNE KOELBL, MARCEL ROSENBACH AND GREGOR PETER SCHMITZ

07/26/2010

WikiLeaks Founder Julian Assange on the 'War Logs'

'I Enjoy Crushing Bastards'



Axel Martens

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange: "We understand the importance of protecting confidential sources."

In a SPIEGEL interview, WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, 39, discusses his decision to publish the Afghanistan war logs, the difficult balance between the public interest and the need for state secrets and why he believes people who wage war are more dangerous than him.

SPIEGEL: You are about to publish a vast amount of classified data on the war in Afghanistan. What is your motivation?

Assange: These files are the most comprehensive description of a war to be published during the course of a war -- in other words, at a time when they still have a chance of doing some good. They cover more than 90,000 different incidents, together with precise geographical locations. They cover the small and the large. A single body of information, they eclipse all that has been previously said about Afghanistan. They will change our perspective on not only the war in Afghanistan, but on all modern wars.

SPIEGEL: Do you think that the publication of this data will influence political decision-makers?

Assange: Yes. This material shines light on the everyday brutality and squalor of war. The archive will change public opinion and it will change the opinion of people in positions of political and diplomatic influence.

SPIEGEL: Aren't you expecting a little too much?

Assange: There is a mood to end the war in Afghanistan. This information won't do it alone, but it will shift political will in a significant manner.

SPIEGEL: The material contains military secrets and names of sources. By publishing it, aren't you endangering the lives of international troops and their informants in Afghanistan?

Assange: The Kabul files contain no information related to current troop movements. The source went through their own harm-minimization process and instructed us to conduct our usual review to make sure there was not a significant chance of innocents being negatively affected. We understand the importance of protecting confidential sources, and we understand why it is important to protect certain US and ISAF sources.

SPIEGEL: So what, specifically, did you do to minimize any possible harm?

Assange: We identified cases where there may be a reasonable chance of harm occurring to the innocent. Those records were identified and edited accordingly.

SPIEGEL: Is there anything that you consider to be a legitimate state secret?

Assange: There is a legitimate role for secrecy, and there is a legitimate role for openness. Unfortunately, those who commit abuses against humanity or against the law find abusing legitimate secrecy to conceal their abuse all too easy. People of good conscience have always revealed abuses by ignoring abusive strictures. It is not WikiLeaks that decides to reveal something. It is a whistleblower or a dissident who decides to reveal it. Our job is to make sure that these individuals are protected, the public is informed and the historical record is not denied.

SPIEGEL: But in the end somebody has to decide whether you publish or not. Who determines the criteria? WikiLeaks considers itself to be a trailblazer when it comes to freedom of information, but it lacks transparency in its own publishing decisions.

Assange: This is ridiculous. We are clear about what we will publish and what we will not. We do not have adhoc editorial decisions. We always release the full primary sources to our articles. What other press organization has such exacting standards? Everyone should try to follow our lead.

SPIEGEL: The problem is that it is difficult to hold WikiLeaks accountable. You operate your servers in countries that offer you broad protection. Does WikiLeaks consider itself to be above the law?

Assange: WikiLeaks does not exist in outer space. We are people who exist on Earth, in particular nations, each of which have a particular set of laws. We have been legally challenged in various countries. We have won every challenge. It is courts that decide the law, not corporations or generals. The law, as expressed by constitutions and courts, has been on our side.

SPIEGEL: You have said that there is a correlation between the transparency for which you are fighting and a just society. What do you mean by that?

Assange: Reform can only come about when injustice is exposed. To oppose an unjust plan before it reaches implementation is to stop injustice.

SPIEGEL: During the Vietnam War, US President Richard Nixon once called Daniel Ellsberg, the leaker of the Pentagon Papers, the most dangerous man in America. Are you today's most dangerous man or the most endangered?

Assange: The most dangerous men are those who are in charge of war. And they need to be stopped. If that makes me dangerous in their eyes, so be it.

SPIEGEL: You could have started a company in Silicon Valley and lived in a home in Palo Alto with a swimming pool. Why did you decide to do the WikiLeaks project instead?

Assange: We all only live once. So we are obligated to make good use of the time that we have and to do something that is meaningful and satisfying. This is something that I find meaningful and satisfying. That is my temperament. I enjoy creating systems on a grand scale, and I enjoy helping people who are vulnerable. And I enjoy crushing bastards. So it is enjoyable work.

Interview conducted by John Goetz and Marcel Rosenbach

guardian.co.uk.

Editorial

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Afghanistan war logs: the unvarnished picture

A leaked trove of US military logs reveals a very different landscape from the one with which we have become familiar

The fog of war is unusually dense in [Afghanistan](#). When it lifts, as it does today with the Guardian's publication of selections from a leaked trove of secret US [military](#) logs, a very different landscape is revealed from the one with which we have become familiar. These war logs – written in the heat of engagement – show a conflict that is brutally messy, confused and immediate. It is in some contrast with the tidied-up and sanitised "public" war, as glimpsed through official communiques as well as the necessarily limited snapshots of embedded reporting.

The war logs consist of more than 92,000 records of actions of the US military in Afghanistan between January 2004 and December 2009. The logs were sent to Wikileaks, the website which publishes untraceable material from whistleblowers. In a collaboration with the New York Times and Der Spiegel, the Guardian has spent weeks sifting through this ocean of data, which has gradually yielded the hidden texture and human horror stories inflicted day to day during an often clumsily prosecuted war. It is important to treat the material for what it is: a contemporaneous catalogue of conflict. Some of the more lurid intelligence reports are of doubtful provenance: some aspects of the coalition's recording of civilian deaths appear unreliable. The war logs – classified as secret – are encyclopedic but incomplete. We have removed any material which threatens the safety of troops, local informants and collaborators.

With these caveats, the collective picture that emerges is a very disturbing one. We today learn of nearly 150 incidents in which coalition forces, including British troops, have killed or injured civilians, most of which have never been reported; of hundreds of border clashes between Afghan and Pakistani troops, two armies which are supposed to be allies; of the existence of a special forces unit whose tasks include killing Taliban and al-Qaida leaders; of the slaughter of civilians caught by the Taliban's improvised explosive devices; and of a catalogue of incidents where coalition troops have fired on and killed each other or fellow Afghans under arms.

Reading these logs, many may suspect there is sometimes a casual disregard for the lives of innocents. A bus that fails to slow for a foot patrol is raked with gunfire, killing four passengers and wounding 11 others. The documents tell how, in going after a foreign fighter, a special forces unit ended up with seven dead children. The infants were not their immediate priority. A

report marked "Nofofn" (not for foreign elements of the coalition) suggests their main concern was to conceal the mobile rocket system that had just been used.

In these documents, Iran's and Pakistan's intelligence agencies run riot. Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) is linked to some of the war's most notorious commanders. The ISI is alleged to have sent 1,000 motorbikes to the warlord Jalaluddin Haqqani for suicide attacks in Khost and Logar provinces, and to have been implicated in a sensational range of plots, from attempting to assassinate President Hamid Karzai to poisoning the beer supply of western troops. These reports are unverifiable and could be part of a barrage of false information provided by Afghan intelligence. But yesterday's White House response to the claims that elements of the Pakistan army had been so specifically linked to the militants made it plain that the status quo is unacceptable. It said that safe havens for militants within Pakistan continued to pose "an intolerable threat" to US forces. However you cut it, this is not an Afghanistan that either the US or Britain is about to hand over gift-wrapped with pink ribbons to a sovereign national government in Kabul. Quite the contrary. After nine years of warfare, the chaos threatens to overwhelm. A war fought ostensibly for the hearts and minds of Afghans cannot be won like this.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/26/world/asia/26warlogs.html>

The New York Times
July 25, 2010

View Is Bleaker Than Official Portrayal of War in Afghanistan

This article was written and reported by C. J. Chivers, Carlotta Gall, Andrew W. Lehren, Mark Mazzetti, Jane Perlez, and Eric Schmitt, with contributions from Jacob Harris and Alan McLean.

A six-year archive of classified military documents made public on Sunday offers an unvarnished, ground-level picture of the war in Afghanistan that is in many respects more grim than the official portrayal.

The secret documents, released on the Internet by an organization called WikiLeaks, are a daily diary of an American-led force often starved for resources and attention as it struggled against an insurgency that grew larger, better coordinated and more deadly each year.

The New York Times, the British newspaper The Guardian and the German magazine Der Spiegel were given access to the voluminous records several weeks ago on the condition that they not report on the material before Sunday.

The documents — some 92,000 reports spanning parts of two administrations from January 2004 through December 2009 — illustrate in mosaic detail why, after the United States has spent almost \$300 billion on the war in Afghanistan, the [Taliban](#) are stronger than at any time since 2001.

As the new American commander in Afghanistan, Gen. [David H. Petraeus](#), tries to reverse the lagging war effort, the documents sketch a war hamstrung by an Afghan government, police force and army of questionable loyalty and competence, and by a Pakistani military that appears at best uncooperative and at worst to work from the shadows as an unspoken ally of the very insurgent forces the American-led coalition is trying to defeat.

The material comes to light as Congress and the public grow increasingly skeptical of the deepening involvement in Afghanistan and its chances for success as next year's deadline to begin withdrawing troops looms.

The archive is a vivid reminder that the Afghan conflict until recently was a second-class war, with money, troops and attention lavished on Iraq while soldiers and [Marines](#) lamented that the Afghans they were training were not being paid.

The reports — usually spare summaries but sometimes detailed narratives — shed light on some elements of the war that have been largely hidden from the public eye:

- The Taliban have used portable heat-seeking missiles against allied aircraft, a fact that has not been publicly disclosed by the military. This type of weapon helped the Afghan mujahedeen defeat the Soviet occupation in the 1980s.
- Secret commando units like Task Force 373 — a classified group of Army and Navy special operatives — work from a “capture/kill list” of about 70 top insurgent commanders. These missions, which have been stepped up under the

Obama administration, claim notable successes, but have sometimes gone wrong, killing civilians and stoking Afghan resentment.

- The military employs more and more [drone aircraft](#) to survey the battlefield and strike targets in Afghanistan, although their performance is less impressive than officially portrayed. Some crash or collide, forcing American troops to undertake risky retrieval missions before the Taliban can claim the drone's weaponry.
- The [Central Intelligence Agency](#) has expanded paramilitary operations inside Afghanistan. The units launch ambushes, order airstrikes and conduct night raids. From 2001 to 2008, the C.I.A. paid the budget of Afghanistan's spy agency and ran it as a virtual subsidiary.

Over all, the documents do not contradict official accounts of the war. But in some cases the documents show that the American military made misleading public statements — attributing the downing of a helicopter to conventional weapons instead of heat-seeking missiles or giving Afghans credit for missions carried out by Special Operations commandos.

White House officials vigorously denied that the Obama administration had presented a misleading portrait of the war in Afghanistan.

“On Dec. 1, 2009, President Obama announced a new strategy with a substantial increase in resources for Afghanistan, and increased focus on Al Qaeda and Taliban safe-havens in Pakistan, precisely because of the grave situation that had developed over several years,” said Gen. James L. Jones, White House national security adviser, in a statement released Sunday.

“We know that serious challenges lie ahead, but if Afghanistan is permitted to slide backwards, we will again face a threat from violent extremist groups like Al Qaeda who will have more space to plot and train,” the statement said.

General Jones also decried the decision by WikiLeaks to make the documents public, saying that the United States “strongly condemns the disclosure of classified information by individuals and organizations which could put the lives of Americans and our partners at risk, and threaten our national security.”

“WikiLeaks made no effort to contact us about these documents – the United States government learned from news organizations that these documents would be posted,” General Jones said.

The archive is clearly an incomplete record of the war. It is missing many references to seminal events and does not include more highly classified information. The documents also do not cover events in 2010, when the influx of more troops into Afghanistan began and a new counterinsurgency strategy took hold.

They suggest that the military's internal assessments of the prospects for winning over the Afghan public, especially in the early days, were often optimistic, even naïve.

There are fleeting — even taunting — reminders of how the war began in the occasional references to the elusive [Osama bin Laden](#). In some reports he is said to be attending meetings in Quetta, Pakistan. His money man is said to be flying from Iran to North Korea to buy weapons. Mr. bin Laden has supposedly ordered a suicide attack against the Afghan president, [Hamid Karzai](#). These reports all seem secondhand at best.

The reports portray a resilient, canny insurgency that has bled American forces through a war of small cuts. The insurgents set the war's pace, usually fighting on ground of their own choosing and then slipping away.

Sabotage and trickery have been weapons every bit as potent as small arms, mortars or suicide bombers. So has Taliban intimidation of Afghan officials and civilians — applied with pinpoint pressure through threats, charm, violence, money, religious fervor and populist appeals.

FEB. 19, 2008 | ZABUL PROVINCE *Intelligence Summary: Officer Threatened*

An Afghan National Army brigade commander working in southern Afghanistan received a phone call from a Taliban mullah named Ezat, one brief report said. "Mullah Ezat told the ANA CDR to surrender and offered him \$100,000(US) to quit working for the Afghan Army," the report said. "Ezat also stated that he knows where the ANA CDR is from and knows his family." [Read the Document »](#)

MAY 9, 2009 | KUNAR PROVINCE *Intelligence Summary: Taliban Recruiter*

A Taliban commander, Mullah Juma Khan, delivered a eulogy at the funeral of a slain insurgent. He played on the crowd's emotions, according to the report: "Juma cried while telling the people an unnamed woman and her baby were killed while the woman was nursing the baby." Finally he made his pitch: "Juma then told the people they needed to be angry at CF [Coalition Force] and ANSF [Afghan National Security Forces] for causing this tragedy" and "invited everyone who wants to fight to join the fighters who traveled with him." [Read the Document »](#)

The insurgents use a network of spies, double agents, collaborators and informers — anything to undercut coalition forces and the effort to build a credible and effective Afghan government capable of delivering security and services.

The reports repeatedly describe instances when the insurgents have been seen wearing government uniforms, and other times when they have roamed the country or appeared for battle in the very Ford Ranger pickup trucks that the United States had provided the Afghan Army and police force.

NOV. 20, 2006 | KABUL *Incident Report: Insurgent Subterfuge*

After capturing four pickup trucks from the Afghan National Army, the Taliban took them to Kabul to be used in suicide bombings. "They intend to use the pick-up trucks to target ANA compounds, ISAF and GOA convoys, as well as ranking GOA and ISAF officials," said a report, referring to coalition forces and the government of Afghanistan. "The four trucks were also accompanied by an unknown quantity of ANA uniforms to facilitate carrying out the attacks." [Read the Document »](#)

The Taliban's use of heat-seeking missiles has not been publicly disclosed — indeed, the military has issued statements that these internal records contradict.

In the form known as a Stinger, such weapons were provided to a previous generation of Afghan insurgents by the United States, and helped drive out the Soviets. The reports suggest that the Taliban's use of these missiles has been neither common nor especially effective; usually the missiles missed.

MAY 30, 2007 | HELMAND PROVINCE *Incident Report: Downed Helicopter*

An American CH-47 transport helicopter was struck by what witnesses described as a portable heat-seeking surface-to-air missile after taking off from a landing zone.

The helicopter, the initial report said, “was engaged and struck with a Missile ... shortly after crossing over the Helmand River. The missile struck the aircraft in the left engine. The impact of the missile projected the aft end of the aircraft up as it burst into flames followed immediately by a nose dive into the crash site with no survivors.”

The crash killed seven soldiers: five Americans, a Briton and a Canadian.

Multiple witnesses saw a smoke trail behind the missile as it rushed toward the helicopter. The smoke trail was an important indicator. Rocket-propelled grenades do not leave them. Heat-seeking missiles do. The crew of other helicopters reported the downing as a surface-to-air missile strike. But that was not what a [NATO](#) spokesman told Reuters.

“Clearly, there were enemy fighters in the area,” said the spokesman, Maj. John Thomas. “It’s not impossible for small-arms fire to bring down a helicopter.”

The reports paint a disheartening picture of the Afghan police and soldiers at the center of the American exit strategy.

The Pentagon is spending billions to train the Afghan forces to secure the country. But the police have proved to be an especially risky investment and are often described as distrusted, even loathed, by Afghan civilians. The reports recount episodes of police brutality, corruption petty and large, extortion and kidnapping. Some police officers defect to the Taliban. Others are accused of collaborating with insurgents, arms smugglers and highway bandits. Afghan police officers defect with trucks or weapons, items captured during successful ambushes or raids.

MARCH 10, 2008 | PAKTIA PROVINCE *Investigation Report: Extortion by the Police*

This report captured the circular and frustrating effort by an American investigator to stop Afghan police officers at a checkpoint from extorting payments from motorists. After a line of drivers described how they were pressed to pay bribes, the American investigator and the local police detained the accused checkpoint police officers.

“While waiting,” the investigator wrote, “I asked the seven patrolmen we detained to sit and relax while we sorted through a problem without ever mentioning why they were being detained. Three of the patrolmen responded by saying that they had only taken money from the truck drivers to buy fuel for their generator.”

Two days later when the American followed up, he was told by police officers that the case had been dropped because the witness reports had all been lost. [Read the Document »](#)

One report documented the detention of a military base worker trying to leave the base with GPS units hidden under his clothes and taped to his leg. Another described the case of a police chief in Zurmat, in Paktia Province, who was accused of falsely reporting that his officers had been in a firefight so he could receive thousands of rounds of new ammunition, which he sold in a bazaar.

Coalition trainers report that episodes of cruelty by the Afghan police undermine the effort to build a credible security force to take over when the allies leave.

OCT. 11, 2009 | BALKH PROVINCE *Incident Report: Brutal Police Chief*

This report began with an account of Afghan soldiers and police officers harassing and beating local civilians for refusing to cooperate in a search. It then related the story of a district police commander who forced himself on a 16-year-old girl. When a civilian complained, the report continued, “The district commander ordered his bodyguard to open fire on the AC [Afghan civilian]. The bodyguard refused, at which time the district commander shot [the bodyguard] in front of the AC.”

Rivalries and friction between the largest Afghan security services — the police and the army — are evident in a number of reports. Sometimes the tensions erupted in outright clashes, as was recorded in the following report from last December that was described as an “enemy action.” The “enemy” in this case was the Afghan National Security Force.

DEC. 4, 2009 | ORUZGAN PROVINCE *Incident Report: Police and Army Rivalry*

A car accident turned deadly when an argument broke out between the police and the Afghan National Army. “The argument escalated and ANA & ANP started to shoot at each other,” a report said.

An Afghan soldier and three Afghan police officers were wounded in the shootout. One civilian was killed and six others were wounded by gunfire. [Read the Document »](#)

One sign of the weakness of the police is that in places they have been replaced by tribal warlords who are charged — informally but surely — with providing the security the government cannot. Often the warlords operate above the law.

NOV. 22, 2009 | KANDAHAR PROVINCE *Incident Report: Illegal Checkpoint*

A private security convoy, ferrying fuel from Kandahar to Oruzgan, was stopped by what was thought to be 100 insurgents armed with assault rifles and PK machine guns, a report said.

It turned out the convoy had been halted by “the local Chief of Police,” who was “demanding \$2000-\$3000 per truck” as a kind of toll. The chief, said the report, from NATO headquarters in Southern Afghanistan, “states he needs the money to run his operation.”

The chief was not actually a police chief. He was Matiullah Khan, a warlord and an American-backed ally of President Karzai who was arguably Oruzgan’s most powerful man. He had a contract, the Ministry of Interior said, to protect the road so NATO’s supply convoys could drive on it, but he had apparently decided to extort money from the convoys himself.

Late in the day, Mr. Matiullah, after many interventions, changed his mind. The report said that friendly forces “report that the COMPASS convoy is moving again and did not pay the fee required.”

The documents show how the best intentions of Americans to help rebuild Afghanistan through provincial reconstruction teams ran up against a bewildering array of problems — from corruption to cultural misunderstandings — as they tried to win over the public by helping repair dams and bridges, build schools and train local authorities.

A series of reports from 2005 to 2008 chart the frustrations of one of the first such teams, assigned to Gardez, in Paktia Province.

NOV. 28, 2006 | PAKTIA PROVINCE *Civil Affairs Report: Orphanage Opens*

An American civil affairs officer could barely contain her enthusiasm as she spoke at a ribbon-cutting ceremony for a new orphanage, built with money from the American military.

The officer said a friend had given her a leather jacket to present to “someone special,” the report noted. She chose the orphanage’s director. “The commander stated that she could think of no one more deserving than someone who cared for orphans,” it said.

The civil affairs team handed out blankets, coats, scarves and toys. The governor even gave money from his own pocket. “All speeches were very positive,” the report concluded. [Read the Document »](#)

DEC. 20, 2006 | PAKTIA PROVINCE *Civil Affairs Report: Not Many Orphans*

The team dropped by to check on the orphanage. “We found very few orphans living there and could not find most of the HA [humanitarian assistance] we had given them,” the report noted.

The team raised the issue with the governor of Paktia, who said he was also concerned and suspected that the money he had donated had not reached the children. He visited the orphanage himself. Only 30 children were there; the director had claimed to have 102. [Read the Document »](#)

OCT. 16, 2007 | PAKTIA PROVINCE *Civil Affairs Report: An Empty Orphanage*

Nearly a year after the opening of the orphanage, the Americans returned for a visit. “There are currently no orphans at the facility due to the Holiday. (Note: orphans are defined as having no father, but may still have mother and a family structure that will have them home for holidays.)” [Read the Document »](#)

FEB. 25, 2007 | PAKTIA PROVINCE *District Report: Lack of Resources*

As the Taliban insurgency strengthened, the lack of a government presence in the more remote districts — and the government’s inability to provide security or resources even to its own officials — is evident in the reports.

An official from Dand Wa Patan, a small sliver of a district along the border with Pakistan, so urgently wanted to talk to the members of the American team that he traveled three and a half hours by taxi — he had no car — to meet them.

“He explained that the enemy had changed their tactics in the area and were no longer fighting from the mountains, no longer sending rockets toward his compound and other areas,” the report noted. “He stated that the enemy focus was on direct action and that his family was a primary target.”

Ten days earlier the Taliban crept up to the wall of his family compound and blew up one of the security towers, the report said. His son lost his legs in the explosion.

He pleaded for more police officers, weapons and ammunition. He also wanted a car so he could drive around the district he was supposed to oversee.

But the Americans’ situation was not much better. For months the reports show how a third — or even a half — of the team’s vehicles were out of service, awaiting spare parts.

NOV. 15, 2006 | PAKTIA PROVINCE *Civil Affairs Report: Local Corruption*

For a while the civil affairs team worked closely with the provincial governor, described as “very charismatic.” Yet both he and the team are hampered by corrupt, negligent and antagonistic officials.

The provincial chief of police is described in one report as “the axel of corruption.”

“He makes every effort to openly and blatantly take money from the ANP troopers and the officers,” one sympathetic officer told the Americans.

Other officers are more clever. One forged rosters, to collect pay for imaginary police officers. A second set up illegal checkpoints to collect tolls around Gardez. Still another stole food and uniforms, leaving his soldiers underfed and ill equipped for the winter.

The governor, meanwhile, was all but trapped. Such animosity developed between him and a senior security official that the governor could not leave his office for weeks at a time, fearing for his life. Finally, the corrupt officials were replaced. But it took months.

SEPT. 24, 2007 | PAKTIA PROVINCE *Civil Affairs Report: The Cost of Corruption*

Their meetings with Afghan district officials gave the American civil affairs officers unique insights into local opinions. Sometimes, the Afghan officials were brutally honest in their assessments.

In one case, provincial council officials visited the Americans at their base in Gardez to report threats — the Taliban had tossed a grenade into their office compound and were prowling the hills. Then the officials began a tirade.

“The people of Afghanistan keep loosing their trust in the government because of the high amount of corrupted government officials,” the report quoted them as saying. “The general view of the Afghans is that the current government is worst than the Taliban.”

“The corrupted government officials are a new concept brought to Afghanistan by the AMERICANS,” the oldest member of the group told the civil affairs team.

In conclusion, the civil affairs officer who wrote the report warned, “The people will support the Anti-Coalition forces and the security condition will degenerate.” He recommended a public information program to educate Afghans about democracy. [Read the Document »](#)

The reports also evoke the rivalries and tensions that swirl within the presidential palace between President Karzai’s circle and the warlords.

OCT. 16, 2006 | KABUL *Intelligence Summary: Political Intrigue*

In a short but heated meeting at the presidential palace, the Kabul police chief, Brig. Gen. Mir Amanullah Gozar, angrily refuted accusations made publicly by Jamil Karzai that he was corrupt and lacked professional experience. The report of the meeting identified Jamil Karzai as the president’s brother; he is in fact a cousin.

General Gozar “said that if Jamil were not the president’s Brother he would kidnap, torture, and kill him,” the report said. He added that he was aware of plans by the American-led coalition to remove him from his post.

He threatened the president, saying that if he were replaced he would reveal “allegations about Karzai having been a drug trader and supporter of the Pakistan-led insurgency in Afghanistan,” presumably a reference to Mr. Karzai’s former links with the Taliban.

Incident by incident, the reports resemble a police blotter of the myriad ways Afghan civilians were killed — not just in airstrikes but in ones and twos — in shootings on the roads or in the villages, in misunderstandings or in a cross-fire, or in chaotic moments when Afghan drivers ventured too close to convoys and checkpoints.

The dead, the reports repeatedly indicate, were not suicide bombers or insurgents, and many of the cases were not reported to the public at the time. The toll of the war — reflected in mounting civilian casualties — left the Americans seeking cooperation and support from an Afghan population that grew steadily more exhausted, resentful, fearful and alienated.

From the war’s outset, airstrikes that killed civilians in large numbers seized international attention, including the aerial bombardment of a convoy on its way to attend President Karzai’s inauguration in 2001. An airstrike in Azizabad, in western Afghanistan, killed as many as 92 people in August 2008. In May 2009, another strike killed 147 Afghan civilians.

SEPT. 3, 2009 | KUNDUZ PROVINCE *Incident Report: Mistaken Airstrike*

This report, filed about the activities of a Joint Terminal Attack Controller team, which is responsible for communication from the ground and guiding pilots during surveillance missions and airstrikes, offers a glimpse into one of the bloodiest mistakes in 2009.

It began with a report from the police command saying that “2X FUEL TRUCKS WERE STOLEN BY UNK NUMBER OF INS” and that the insurgents planned to cross the Kunduz River with their prizes. It was nighttime, and the river crossing was not illuminated. Soon, the report noted, the “JTAC OBSERVED KDZ RIVER AND REPORTED THAT IT DISCOVERED THE TRUCKS AS WELL AS UP TO 70 INS” at “THE FORD ON THE RIVER. THE TRUCKS WERE STUCK IN THE MUD.” How the JTAC team was observing the trucks was not clear, but many aircraft have infrared video cameras that can send a live feed to a computer monitor on the ground.

According to the report, a German commander of the provincial reconstruction team “LINKED UP WITH JTAC AND, AFTER ENSURING THAT NO CIVILIANS WERE IN THE VICINITY,” he “AUTHORIZED AN AIRSTRIKE.” An F-15 then dropped two 500-pound guided bombs. The initial report said that “56X INS KIA [insurgents killed in action] (CONFIRMED) AND 14X INS FLEEING IN NE DIRECTION. THE 2X FUEL TRUCKS WERE ALSO DESTROYED.”

The initial report was wrong. The trucks had been abandoned, and a crowd of civilians milled around them, removing fuel. How the commander and the JTAC had ensured “that no civilians were in the area,” as the report said, was not explained.

The first sign of the mistake documented in the initial report appeared the next day, when another report said that at “0900 hrs International Media reported that US airstrike had killed 60 civilians in Kunduz. The media are reporting that Taliban did steal the trucks and had invited civilians in the area to take fuel.” [Read the Document »](#)

The reports show that the smaller incidents were just as insidious and alienating, turning Afghans who had once welcomed Americans as liberators against the war.

MARCH 5, 2007 | GHAZNI PROVINCE *Incident Report: Checkpoint Danger*

Afghan police officers shot a local driver who tried to speed through their checkpoint on a country road in Ghazni Province south of Kabul. The police had set up a temporary checkpoint on the highway just outside the main town in the district of Ab Band.

“A car approached the check point at a high rate of speed,” the report said. All the police officers fled the checkpoint except one. As the car passed the checkpoint it knocked down the lone policeman. He fired at the vehicle, apparently thinking that it was a suicide car bomber.

“The driver of the vehicle was killed,” the report said. “No IED [improvised explosive device] was found and vehicle was destroyed.”

The police officer was detained in the provincial capital, Ghazni, and questioned. He was then released. The American mentoring the police concluded in his assessment that the policeman’s use of force was appropriate. Rather than acknowledging the public hostility such episodes often engender, the report found a benefit: it suggested that the shooting would make Afghans take greater care at checkpoints in the future.

“Effects on the populace clearly identify the importance of stopping at checkpoints,” the report concluded. [Read the Document »](#)

MARCH 21, 2007 | PAKTIKA PROVINCE *Incident Report: A Deaf Man Is Shot*

Members of a C.I.A. paramilitary unit moved into the village of Malekshay in Paktika Province close to the border with Pakistan when they saw an Afghan running away at the sight of their convoy, one report recounted. Members of the unit shot him in the ankle, and medics treated him at the scene. The unit had followed military procedure — first shouting at the man, then firing warning shots and only after that shooting to wound, the report said.

Yet elders in the village told the unit that the man, Shum Khan, was deaf and mute and that he had fled from the convoy out of nervousness. Mr. Khan was “unable to hear the warnings or warning shots. Ran out of fear and confusion,” the report concludes. The unit handed over supplies in compensation. [Read the Document »](#)

The reports reveal several instances of allied forces accidentally firing on one another or on Afghan forces in the fog of war, often with tragic consequences.

APRIL 6, 2006 | HELMAND PROVINCE *Incident Report: Friendly Fire*

A British Army convoy driving at night in southern Afghanistan suddenly came under small-arms fire. One of the British trucks rolled over. The British troops split into two groups, pulled back from the clash and called in airstrikes from American A-10 attack planes. After several confusing minutes, commanders realized that the Afghan police had attacked the British troops, mistaking them for Taliban fighters. One Afghan police officer was killed and 12 others were wounded.

The shifting tactics of the Americans can be seen as well in the reports, as the war strategy veered from freely using force to trying to minimize civilian casualties. But as the documents make clear, each approach has its frustrations for the American effort.

Strict new rules of engagement, imposed in 2009, minimized the use of airstrikes after some had killed civilians and turned Afghans against the war. But the rules also prompted anger from American troops and their families. The troops felt that their lives were not sufficiently valued because they had to justify every request for air or artillery support, making it easier for the Taliban to fight.

OCT. 1, 2008 | KUNAR PROVINCE *Incident Report: Barrage*

In the days when field commanders had a freer hand, an infantry company commander observed an Afghan with a two-way radio who was monitoring the company's activities. Warning of "IMMINENT THREAT," the commander said he would "destroy" the man and his equipment — in other words, kill him. A short while later, a 155-millimeter artillery piece at a forward operating base in the nearby Pech Valley began firing high-explosive rounds — 24 in all.

NOV. 13, 2009 | HELMAND PROVINCE *Incident Report: Escalation of Force*

As the rules tightened, the reports picked up a tone that at times seemed lawyerly. Many make reference, even in pitched fights, to troops using weapons in accordance with "ROE Card A" — which guides actions of self-defense rather than attacks or offensive acts. This report described an Apache helicopter firing warning shots after coming under fire. Its reaction was described as "an escalation of force."

The helicopter pilots reported that insurgents "engaged with SAF [surface-to-air fire]" and that "INTEL suggested they were going to be fired upon again during their extraction."

The helicopters "fired 40x 30mm warning shots to deter any further engagement."

The report included the information that now is common to incident reports in which Western forces fire. "The terrain was considered rurally open and there were no CIV PID IVO [civilians positively identified in the vicinity of] the target within reasonable certainty. There was no damage to infrastructure. BDA [battle damage assessment] recording conducted by AH-64 Gun Tape. No follow up required. The next higher command was consulted. The enemy engaged presented, in the opinion of the ground forces, an imminent threat. Engagement is under ROE Card A. Higher HQ have been informed." [Read the Document »](#)

The reports show in previously unknown detail the omnipresence of drones in Afghanistan, the [Air Force's](#) missile-toting Predators and Reapers that hunt militants. The military's use of drones in Afghanistan has rapidly expanded in the past few years; the [United States Air Force](#) now flies about 20 Predator and Reaper aircraft a day — nearly twice as many as a year ago — over vast stretches of hostile Afghan territory. Allies like Britain and Germany fly their own fleets.

The incident reports chronicle the wide variety of missions these aircraft carry out: taking photographs, scooping up electronic transmissions, relaying images of running battles to field headquarters, attacking militants with bombs and missiles. And they also reveal the extent that armed drones are being used to support American Special Operations missions.

Documents in the Afghan archive capture the strange nature of the drone war in Afghanistan: missile-firing robots killing shovel-wielding insurgents, a remote-controlled war against a low-tech but resilient insurgency.

DEC. 9, 2008 | KANDAHAR PROVINCE *Incident Report: Predator Attack*

Early one winter evening in southern Afghanistan, an Air Force Predator drone spotted a group of insurgents suspected of planting roadside bombs along a roadway less than two miles from Forward Operating Base Hupal, an American outpost.

Unlike the drones the C.I.A. operated covertly across the border in Pakistan, this aircraft was one of nearly a dozen military drones patrolling vast stretches of hostile Afghan territory on any given day.

Within minutes after identifying the militants, the Predator unleashed a Hellfire missile, all but evaporating one of the figures digging in the dark.

When ground troops reached the crater caused by the missile, costing \$60,000, all that was left was a shovel and a crowbar. [Read the Document »](#)

SEPT. 13, 2009 | BADAKHSAN PROVINCE *Incident Report: A Lost Drone*

Flying over southern Afghanistan on a combat mission, one of the Air Force's premier armed drones, a Reaper, went rogue.

Equipped with advanced radar and sophisticated cameras, as well as Hellfire missiles and 500-pound bombs, the Reaper had lost its satellite link to a pilot who was remotely steering the drone from a base in the United States.

Again and again, the pilot struggled to regain control of the drone. Again and again, no response. The reports reveal that the military in Afghanistan lost many of the tiny five-pound surveillance drones with names like Raven and Desert Hawk that troops tossed out like model airplanes to peer around the next hill. But they had never before lost one of the Reapers, with its 66-foot wingspan.

As a last resort, commanders ordered an Air Force F-15E Strike Eagle fighter jet to shoot down the \$13 million aircraft before it soared unguided into neighboring Tajikistan.

Ground controllers picked an unpopulated area over northern Afghanistan and the jet fired a Sidewinder missile, destroying the Reaper's turbo-prop engine. Suddenly, the satellite link was restored, but it was too late to salvage the flight. At 5:30 a.m., controllers steered it into a remote mountainside for a final fiery landing. [Read the Document »](#)

As the Afghanistan war took priority under the Obama administration, more Special Operations forces were shifted from Iraq to conduct secret missions. The C.I.A.'s own paramilitary operations inside Afghanistan grew in tandem — as did the agency's close collaboration with Afghanistan's own spy agency.

Usually, such teams conducted night operations aimed at top Taliban commanders and militants on the "capture/kill" list. While individual commandos have displayed great courage, the missions can end in calamity as well as success. The expanding special operations have stoked particular resentment among Afghans — for their lack of coordination with local forces, the civilian casualties they frequently inflicted and the lack of accountability.

JUNE 17, 2007 | PAKTIKA PROVINCE INCIDENT REPORT: Botched Night Raid

Shortly after five American rockets destroyed a compound in Paktika Province, helicopter-borne commandos from Task Force 373 — a classified Special Operations unit of Army Delta Force operatives and members of the [Navy Seals](#) — arrived to finish the job.

The mission was to capture or kill Abu Laith al-Libi, a top commander for Al Qaeda, who was believed to be hiding at the scene of the strike.

But Mr. Libi was not there. Instead, the Special Operations troops found a group of men suspected of being militants and their children. Seven of the children had been killed by the rocket attack.

Some of the men tried to flee the Americans, and six were quickly killed by encircling helicopters. After the rest were taken as detainees, the commandos found one child still alive in the rubble, and performed CPR for 20 minutes.

Word of the attack spread a wave of anger across the region, forcing the local governor to meet with village elders to defuse the situation.

American military officials drew up a list of “talking points” for the governor, pointing out that the target had been a senior Qaeda commander, that there had been no indications that women and children would be present and that a nearby mosque had not been damaged.

After the meeting, the governor reported that local residents were in shock, but that he had “pressed the Talking Points.” He even “added a few of his own that followed in line with our current story.”

The attack was caused by the “presence of hoodlums,” the governor told the people. It was a tragedy that children had been killed, he said, but “it could have been prevented had the people exposed the presence of insurgents in the area.”

He promised that the families would be compensated for their loss.

Mr. Libi was killed the following year by a C.I.A. drone strike. [Read the Document »](#)

APRIL 6, 2008 | NURISTAN PROVINCE Incident Report: A Raging Firefight

As they scrambled up the rocks toward a cluster of mud compounds perched high over the remote Shok Valley, a small group of American Green Berets and Afghan troops, known as Task Force Bushmaster, were confronted with a hail of gunfire from inside the insurgent stronghold.

They were there to capture senior members of the Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin militant group, part of a mission that the military had dubbed Operation Commando Wrath.

But what they soon discovered on that remote, snowy hilltop was that they were vastly outnumbered by a militant force of hundreds of fighters. Reinforcements were hours away.

A firefight raged for nearly seven hours, with sniper fire pinning down the Green Berets on a 60-foot rock ledge for much of that time.

Casualties mounted. By midmorning, nearly half of the Americans were wounded, but the militants directed their gunfire on the arriving medevac helicopters, preventing them from landing.

“TF Bushmaster reports they are combat ineffective and request reinforcement at this time.”

For a time, radio contact was lost.

Air Force jets arrived at the scene and began pummeling the compounds with 2,000-pound bombs, but the militants continued to advance down the mountain toward the pinned-down group.

The task force reported that there were “ 50-100 insurgents moving to reinforce against Bushmaster elements from the SW.”

Carrying wounded Americans shot in the pelvis, arm and legs — as well as two dead Afghans — the group made its way down toward the valley floor. Eventually, the helicopters were able to arrive to evacuate the dead and wounded.

Ten members of the Green Berets would receive Silver Stars for their actions during the battle, the highest number given to Special Forces soldiers for a single battle since the Vietnam War. By Army estimates, 150 to 200 militants were killed in the battle. [Read the Document »](#)

MARCH 8, 2008 | BAGRAM AIR BASE *Meeting Report: A Plea for Help*

Toward the end of a long meeting with top American military commanders, during which he delivered a briefing about the security situation in eastern Afghanistan, corruption in the government and Pakistan’s fecklessness in hunting down militants, Afghanistan’s top spy laid out his problem.

Amrullah Saleh, then director of the National Directorate of Security, told the Americans that the C.I.A. would no longer be handling his spy service’s budget. For years, the C.I.A. had essentially run the N.D.S. as a subsidiary, but by 2009 the Afghan government was preparing to take charge of the agency’s budget.

Mr. Saleh estimated that with the C.I.A. no longer bankrolling the Afghan spies, he could be facing a budget cut of 30 percent.

So he made a request. With the budget squeeze coming, Mr. Saleh asked the Americans for any AK-47s and ammunition they could spare.

If they had any spare boots, he would also take those, he said. [Read the Document »](#)



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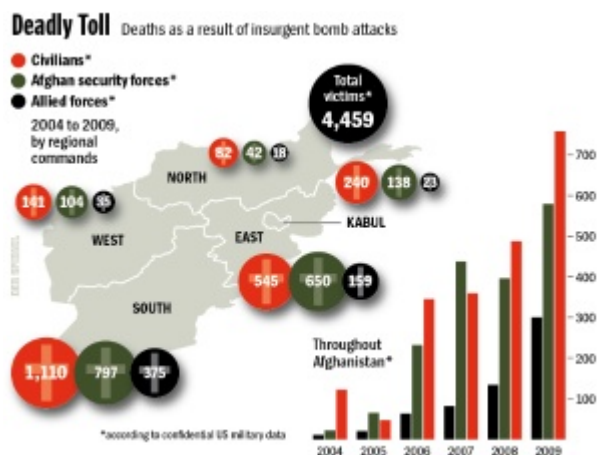
The Afghanistan Protocol

Explosive Leaks Provide Image of War from Those Fighting It

By [Matthias Gebauer](#), [John Goetz](#), Hans Hoyng, [Susanne Koelbl](#), [Marcel Rosenbach](#) and Gregor Peter Schmitz

In an unprecedented development, close to 92,000 classified documents pertaining to the war in Afghanistan have been leaked. SPIEGEL, the *New York Times* and the *Guardian* have analyzed the raft of mostly classified documents. The war logs expose the true scale of the Western military deployment -- and the problems beleaguering Germany's Bundeswehr in the Hindu Kush.

A total of 91,731 reports from United States military databanks relating to the war in Afghanistan are to be made publicly available on the Internet. Never before has it been possible to compare the reality on the battlefield in such a detailed manner with what the US Army propaganda machinery is propagating. WikiLeaks plans to post the documents, most of which are classified, on its website.



Britain's *Guardian* newspaper, the *New York Times* and SPIEGEL have all vetted the material and compared the data with independent reports. All three media sources have concluded that the documents are authentic and provide an unvarnished image of the war in Afghanistan -- from the perspective of the soldiers who are fighting it.

The reports, from troops engaged in the ongoing combat, were tersely summarized and quickly dispatched. For the most part, they originate from sergeants -- but some have been penned by the occasional lieutenant at a command post or ranking analysts with the military intelligence service.

The documents' release comes at a time when calls for a withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan are growing -- even in America. Last week, representatives from more than 70 nations and organizations met in Kabul for the Afghanistan conference. They assured President Hamid Karzai that his country would be in a position by 2014 to guarantee security using its own soldiers and police.

A Gloomy Picture

But such shows of optimism seem cynical in light of the descriptions of the situation in Afghanistan provided in the classified documents. Nearly nine years after the start of the war, they paint a gloomy picture. They portray Afghan security forces as the hapless victims of Taliban attacks. They also offer a conflicting impression of the deployment of drones, noting that America's miracle weapons are also entirely vulnerable.

And they show that the war in northern Afghanistan, where German troops are stationed, is becoming increasingly perilous. The number of warnings about possible Taliban attacks in the region -- fuelled by support from Pakistan -- has increased dramatically in the past year.

The documents offer a window into the war in the Hindu Kush -- one which promises to change the way we think about the ongoing violence in Afghanistan. They will also be indispensable for anyone seeking to inform themselves about the war in the future.

Despite repeated requests, the White House refused to provide any comment in time for the deadline of the printed edition of SPIEGEL. On Saturday evening, however, a White House official finally provided written answers to select questions about the content of the reports obtained, but refused to grant an interview.

Ben Rhodes, deputy national security advisor for communications, said: "Since taking office, President Obama has been very clear and candid with the American people about the challenges that we face in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The president and senior officials in his administration have spoken openly and repeatedly about the safe havens that exist in Pakistan, the security and governance challenges in Afghanistan, and the difficulties that lie ahead. ... It is important to note that the time period reflected in the documents is January 2004 to December 2009. The war in Afghanistan was under-resourced for many years. ... On Dec. 1, 2009, President Obama announced a new strategy and new resources for Afghanistan and Pakistan precisely because of the grave situation there."

Responding to the intention of WikiLeaks to make the classified military documents available online, Rhodes said: "We strongly condemn the disclosure of classified information by individuals and organizations that put the lives of the US and partner service members at risk and threatens our national security." He said that WikiLeaks made "no effort to contact the United States government

about these documents, which may contain information that endanger the lives of Americans, our partners and local populations who cooperate with us."

The editors in chief of SPIEGEL, the *New York Times* and the *Guardian* have agreed that they would not publish especially sensitive information in the classified material -- like the names of the US military's Afghan informants or information that could create additional security risks for soldiers stationed in Afghanistan. The publishers were unanimous in their belief that there is a justified public interest in the material because it provides a more thorough understanding of a war that continues today after almost nine years.

SPIEGEL ONLINE has summarized a selection of the most important findings in the data.

The members of Task Force 373, a troop of US elite soldiers that includes Navy Seals and members of the Delta Force, receive their orders directly from the Pentagon and are independent of the chain of command of the international ISAF Afghanistan security forces. Their mission is to deactivate top Taliban and terrorists by either killing or capturing them.

For years, a major effort was made to keep a lid on the details of their deployment. With the leaking of the war logs on Sunday, however, their work is an open secret.

The mission reports also offer considerable information about the coalition troops' classified list of enemies. The "Joint Prioritized Effects List" (JPEL), as it is soberly referred to in military circles, contains the names of Taliban, drug barons, bombmakers and al-Qaida members -- each with a processing number and a priority level. The decision on whether or not to arrest or kill the targeted person is often left to the hunters themselves.

A total of 84 reports about JPEL actions can be found in the thousands of pieces of data. Experts consider it a fact that targeted killings are taking place in the war in Afghanistan. But no top military officials are willing to discuss the issue. The newly released data now show what command units like Task Force 373 are up to each night -- and how things can also go terribly wrong.

A report on June 17, 2007, for example, includes a warning in the second sentence that this operation of the TF 373 must be "kept protected." Details about the mission could not be provided to other countries contributing to the ISAF forces.

The aim was to kill prominent al-Qaida functionary Abu Laith al-Libi. The special forces suspected that the top terrorist and several of his followers were present at a Koran school the soldiers had been staking out for a number of days.

But after the impact of five American rockets, instead of finding al-Libi, the ground forces discovered six dead children in the rubble of the school. A further seriously injured child was also found but could not be saved.

The newly emerged documents do not contain any information suggesting that German troops were involved in any excesses of violence against the civilian population or in any illegal clandestine operations. Nevertheless, they convey an image of Germany's armed forces, the Bundeswehr, that is still devastating because they depict a German military that stumbled into the conflict with great naiveté.

The Germans thought that the northern provinces where their soldiers are stationed would be more peaceful compared to other provinces and that the situation would remain that way.

They were wrong. As far back as the end of 2005, resistance against the international troop presence began to grow -- locals were either threatened by the Taliban and powerful warlords or their support was bought. Warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, for example, spurred the fighting by offering 100,000 to 500,000 afghanis (\$2,000 to \$10,000) to the leader of any insurgency group. Hekmatyar's appeals and cash donations are carefully documented in the reports.

At the start of the deployment, some Bundeswehr soldiers jokingly called the small city of Kunduz "Bad Kunduz," the word "Bad" being the German word officially bestowed on spa towns. But peaceful days in Kunduz, where a large number of German troops are stationed, have long been a thing of the past. At the very latest, the quiet ended on May 19, 2007. That day, three German soldiers were killed by a suicide bomber as they tried to buy refrigerators at a local market. Eight Afghan civilians also died in the first deadly attack deliberately targeted at Germans in the region.

In a "threat report" dated May 31, 2007, German troops based in Kunduz reported on the general situation following another suicide attack. "Contrary to all expectations of the Regional Command North, the attacks of the insurgents in Kunduz are going on as foreseen by the Provincial Reconstruction Team Kunduz and mentioned before several times," the German document states, adding that more attacks, particularly against ISAF troops, "are strongly expected."

The soldiers appear to have been correct to have felt they were under a state of siege. The documents that have been obtained are comprised primarily of so-called "threat reports," thousands of danger scenarios and concrete warnings about planned attacks. These reports provide a clearer picture of the deterioration of the security situation in northern Afghanistan than the information provided by the German government or the federal parliament, the Bundestag, which must provide a legal mandate for the Bundeswehr's deployments abroad. Police checkpoints are constantly attacked or come under fire, patrols are targeted in deadly ambushes and roadside bombs explode.

They also show how close northern Afghanistan has slid toward a new civil war and how little the Germans have achieved during their deployment in the Hindu Kush.

The classified situation report from the "RC East" region in eastern Afghanistan at first reads like a routine transcript: "Oct. 17, 2009: At approximately 1300 ANA (Afghan National Army) received intelligence that approximately 20 insurgents were moving south of their position in the wadi (dried-out river bed). At approximately 1400 the Raven was launched, and flew directly to FB. We observed no enemy in the wadi." But problems were then experienced with the flight of the Raven, a US military reconnaissance drone. "While making the U turn, approximately 300M from FB (Fire Base) -- the bird suddenly lost altitude and crashed," the report states.

Then the situation grew hectic: "Immediately we attempted to secure a dismounted patrol from FB to secure the bird, and prepared a patrol of 6 US (soldiers) 40 ANA (Afghan soldiers) ... and requested immediate CCA (air cover) to over watch the crash site and try to get eyes on the raven. While preparing to SP (conduct a search patrol) the ANA got cold feet and decided they did not want to do the dismounted patrol."

In the end the soldiers did set out to search for the crashed drone, but they had to turn back because insurgents were reportedly already waiting for the opportunity to ambush the soldiers as they attempted to salvage the drone.

System Failures, Computer Glitches and Human Error

Indeed, the secret memos reveal the drawbacks of a weapon that has been lauded by the US military as a panacea, a view shared by the president. In his short time in office, Barack Obama has unleashed double the number of drone missions ordered by his seemingly trigger-happy predecessor, George W. Bush.

The unmanned assassin can fly for more than 20 hours and kill at lightning speed. But they are not always reliable. According to official reports, 38 Predator and Reaper drones have crashed while on combat missions in both Afghanistan and Iraq, while a further nine have crashed during test flights on military bases in the US. Each crash costs the government between \$3.7 million (€2.8 million) and \$5 million.

The US Department of Defense accident reports show that system failures, computer glitches and human errors are common occurrences during drone missions. It seems that serious problems were ignored because of the need for the drones to be deployed as quickly as possible. The new weapon was urgently in demand following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 and the hasty start of the invasion of Afghanistan.

"The drones were not ready for going into combat," says Travis Burdine, manager of the Air Force Unmanned Aircraft Systems Task Force. "We had no time to iron out the problems." Burdine's statement is backed up by reports in the war logs. Indeed, the quiet killers seem to have a lot of defects.

It is not just the costs incurred by these crashes that worry the US military. Even the smaller reconnaissance drones are packed with complicated computer technology -- advances the military doesn't want to fall into enemy hands. Both Reapers and Predators have a so-called "zero out" function, which allows data to be deleted remotely. Unfortunately, this feature sometimes fails. And out of fear that important information could fall into the hands of the Taliban, each drone crash necessitates elaborate -- and dangerous -- salvage operations.

The Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Pakistan's secret service, originally helped to build up and deploy the Taliban after Afghanistan descended into a bitter and fratricidal civil war between the mujahedeen who had prevailed over the Soviets and forced their withdrawal. Despite all of the reassurances from Pakistani politicians that the old ties are cut, the country is still pursuing an ambiguous policy in the region -- at once serving as both an ally to the US and as a helper to its enemy.

There is plenty of new evidence to support this thesis. The documents clearly show that the Pakistani intelligence agency is the most important accomplice the Taliban has outside of Afghanistan. The war against the Afghan security forces, the Americans and their ISAF allies is still being conducted from Pakistan.

The country is an important safe haven for enemy forces -- and serves as a base for issuing their deployment. New recruits to the Taliban stream across the Pakistan-Afghan border, including feared foreign fighters -- among them Arabs, Chechnyans, Uzbekis, Uighurs and even European Islamists.

According to the war logs, the ISI envoys are present when insurgent commanders hold war councils - and even give specific orders to carry out murders. These include orders to try to assassinate Afghan President Hamid Karzai. For example, a threat report dated August 21, 2008 warned: "Colonel Mohammad Yusuf from the ISI had directed Taliban official Maulawi Izzatullah to see that Karzai was assassinated."

Former Pakistan intelligence chief General Hamid Gul plays a prominent role in the ISI documents. After he left office, Gul came across in the Western media as a kind of propagandist for the Taliban. In the documents, Gul is depicted as an important source of aid to the Taliban and even, in one report, as "a leader" of the insurgents. One threat report from Jan. 14, 2008 claims that he coordinated the planned kidnapping of United Nations employees on Highway 1 between Kabul and Jalalabad.

The memos state that Gul ordered suicide attacks, and they also describe the former intelligence chief as one of the most important suppliers of weaponry to the Taliban. One report mentions a convoy of 65 trucks carrying munitions that Gul allegedly organized for the Taliban. Another claims the ISI delivered 1,000 motorcycles to the Haqqanis, a warlord family led by Sirajuddin Haqqani who -- together with the Taliban and Hekmatyar -- are among the three greatest opponents of Western forces in Afghanistan. Another mentions 7,000 weapons that were sent to the border province of Kunar, including Kalashnikovs, mortars and Strella rockets.

Still, even those who drew up the reports are uncertain of their veracity. This kind of uncertainty creeps up often in the documents. They reveal the great weakness of the US communications strategy.

Addressing the facets about Pakistan, White House official Rhodes responded: "The status quo is not acceptable, which is precisely why the United States had focused so much on this challenge. Pakistan is moving in the right direction, but more must be done. The safe havens for violent extremist groups within Pakistan continue to pose an intolerable threat to the United States, to Afghanistan and to the Pakistani people who have suffered greatly from terrorism. The Pakistani government -- and Pakistan's military and intelligence services -- must continue their strategic shift against violent extremist groups within their borders and stay on the offensive against them."

America's intelligence agencies are drowning in a sea of data. Fearful of repeating the intelligence mistakes that occurred prior to 9/11, analysts seem to be blindly reporting every single thing.

Security experts have been complaining for some time that these countless reports concentrate too heavily on the opinions and the movements of the enemy -- in this case on the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Far too many analysts and too many reconnaissance flights seem to be concerned with sketching out the hierarchy of the insurgents' networks and creating lists of enemies who should be killed or captured. Intelligence agents are constantly gathering statements from local informants, whose eagerness to please the Americans often surpasses their reliability.

Yet the most serious issues are too often overlooked: The protection of the Afghan civilians, the analysis of the political environment and the search for solution to this endless conflict.

One thing, however, is certain. These thousands of secret documents indicate that, after almost nine years of war, a victory in Hindu Kush looks farther away than ever.